

**MEMBERSHIP IDENTITY AND CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR:
THE CASE OF CONSUMER CO-OPERATIVES**

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By

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ABSTRACT

The study of retail and consumption geographies has become increasingly popular areas of research in the broader discipline of geography over the last decade. Research has covered many aspects of retailing structure and practice, including retailing formats, shopping patterns and consumer identities. However, consumer co-operatives and their members as of yet have not been studied in geography, which is interesting given their considerable presence in the retailing environment. The success of consumer co-operatives in the retailing landscape hinges on the loyalty and economic participation of their members. Their loyalty in the co-operative may in turn be influenced by their identification with the organization. This can pose both challenges and opportunities for co-operatives to succeed in the face of strong retailing competition.

This research is thus an attempt to examine the membership identities of co-operative members, and how this influences their consumer behaviour. To this end, self-administered questionnaires were distributed among members and non-members who patronized the Calgary Co-operative Association. They were asked about aspects of the consumer behaviour, shopping preferences, and identification with the co-operative. It was found that overall, members and non-members did not differ in their consumer behaviour. They traveled the same distances, showed the same levels of shopping loyalty at the Co-op, and had the same preferences for the ideal shopping environment. The greater difference however, lay within the membership. When members were disaggregated based on their levels of identification with the Co-op, it was found that members who more highly identified with the Co-op exhibited more loyal shopping behaviour with the Co-op, and those that had a lesser identification with the Co-op exhibited lower shopping loyalty to the Co-op. This has implications for further research on consumer identities with different retailing formats, co-operatives in other areas, and further adds to the growing body of research in geographies of retailing and consumption and co-operative studies.

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DEDICATION

To my parents, Greg and Glenda, my grandparents, Gerrie, Elmer, and Betty, and to my brother, Kyler, for all of their love and support.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Statement of Problem

Geographies of retailing and consumption have become increasingly popular areas of research in the broader discipline of geography. These sub disciplines have moved from a narrow focus on the structure of retailing sectors, and the modeling of retail site location and consumer spatial behaviours, to encompassing additional research themes and methodological perspectives. These additional perspectives range from the analysis of market restructuring and market internationalization; the analysis of alternative retailing places and forms such as home shopping or online retailing; analysis of the creation of consumption landscapes; the incorporation of new methodologies to study retailing and consumption geographies; and the analysis of identity creation through the consumption of commodities or shopping space (Wrigley and Lowe, 1996; 2002).

Consumer co-operation is one retailing format which has been largely neglected as a topic of study in retailing and consumption geographies. As member-owned business entities, consumer co-operatives exist primarily to serve the needs of their members. However, these organizations also exist in the same business environment as private retailing operations, and are facing challenges both external to their organization, and internally in order to survive in the future. Like other retailers, co-operatives have to keep abreast of changes in the retailing environment such as market restructurings, the

speed of adoption of new technologies, more efficient competition, and maintaining market shares in a fiercely competitive industry. Alongside this, a perceived de-emphasis on the associational aspects of co-operative organizations such as member participation in the co-operative and member education are hypothesized to result in a co-operative identity which is less differentiated from that of other private businesses, which could lead to declining member commitment and loyalty and weakened member identities with the co-operative. While Canada has a particularly strong and successful retail co-operative movement at present, co-operatives must still be particularly aware of this possibility, as member-owned organizations which rely on the patronage of their members in order to succeed.

On the other hand, the associational aspects of being a co-operative could be an opportunity for co-operatives to keep ahead in the retailing environment. As this thesis will highlight, if members find importance in their membership in the co-operative, this may spell out in more loyal shopping patterns. Thus, it is important to gain a better understanding of membership identity, and how this impacts consumer behaviour.

Overall, an understanding of the relationship between membership identity and consumer behaviour will benefit both private retailers and the consumer co-operative movement. Firstly, private retailers will benefit from a better understanding of membership and behaviour, as there has been an increased use of loyalty schemes among retailers to maintain a loyal customer base. Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, in understanding how identity impacts consumer behaviour, consumer co-operatives will be better prepared to face the challenges of the retailing environment in the future.

1.2 Research Questions and Hypotheses

In order to meet the challenges of successful operation in the future, consumer co-operatives need to have a better understanding of their members. Perhaps most importantly, consumer co-operatives depend upon the economic participation of their members for enterprise success; and, because the level of participation potentially hinges upon how well the individual identifies him/herself as a member of the co-operative, it is integral that the relationships between membership identity and consumer behaviour be studied. This relationship has yet to be empirically studied in the academic literature; furthermore, this is an area of research in which geographers are well suited to make a contribution. This research will study the following research question:

Does membership identity in a consumer co-operative influence consumer behaviour?

Identity is a complex concept to define and interpret, and different conceptualizations in the literature highlight this (Brown, 2001; Hogg and Abrams, 1988; Paasi, 2002). Bhattacharya et al. (1995) see member identity occurring when an individual has a 'sense of connectedness to an organization and defines him/herself in terms of the organization' (p. 46). Thus, individuals may have varying ways in which they identify themselves as co-operative members. For example, co-operative membership may have a large role in how they see themselves, or it may have a lesser role, thus potentially creating stronger or weaker membership identities. In their study of membership identification among art museum members, Bhattacharya et al. (1995) used such aspects as willingness to recommend membership to others, and increased loyalty to indicate membership identity. Quantitative measurement of member

identification often use Likert scales to measure the strength of member identification (Bhattacharya et al., 1995, Stoel 2002)

Consumer behaviour can be defined as the ‘process of buying and consuming goods and services’ (Lewis and Litter, 1999, p. 29). Basic aspects of consumer behaviour would include such things as shopping trip frequencies and shopping trip distances.

In order to fully elucidate the research question, the following four hypotheses will be tested:

- **Consumer co-operative members have different attitudes to shopping at the co-operative than non-members**
- **Consumer co-operative members will be on average more likely to frequent the co-operative than non-members**
- **Consumer co-operative members with a strong membership identity will be more likely to shop at the consumer co-operative over other retailing forms**
- **Consumer co-operative members are more likely to travel longer distances to shop at the co-operative**

The first hypothesis will test whether or not members have different motivations for choosing to shop at the co-operative than non-members. Because members are stakeholders in the success of the co-operative as a business, their motives for shopping at the co-operative are hypothesized to be of a more associational type, for instance because it is member owned, keeping profits in the community, etc. It was found in an older study of food co-operatives in the United States that support for co-op values was a major motivator for members to shop at the co-op (Sommer and Horner, 1981). On the other hand, it is assumed that non-members will be more motivated to shop at the co-operative by base reasons such as quality and price.

The second hypothesis will examine differences between members and non-members in terms of consumer behaviour. Hypothetically members have a vested interest in the success of the co-operative. Thus, it can be assumed that, on average, co-operative members will tend to shop at the co-operative more often (Sommer and Horner, 1981).

The third hypothesis addresses varying aspects of membership identity. It is assumed that those individuals with a higher identification and interest in the co-operative will more likely shop there more often, as opposed to members (or non-members) who have weaker member identities. Identification with the co-operative may be evidenced through many different aspects of their behaviour related to the co-operative. For instance, weaker member identities may be evidenced through discount shopping behaviour (i.e. shopping at many stores for the lowest prices). Related to this, in a study of art museum members, Bhattacharya, Rao and Glynn (1995) found that member identification was positively related to visiting frequency and donating activity, among other member behaviours. On the other hand, member identification was negatively related to participation in similar organizations.

The fourth hypothesis explores whether or not difference in willingness to travel longer distances is evidenced among members with stronger versus weaker member identities. Preston and Takahashi (1988) have noted in a study of the relationship between shopping trip distance and multistop shopping trips that because groceries are bulky and perishable, the distance traveled for groceries may be shorter than compared to other goods. On the other hand, Clarke (2000) wrote that consumers are more likely to patronize the stores closest to them, however, that a store with lower prices than the competition will attract customers from larger distances. It would be important to

examine whether or not membership identity in a consumer co-operative has the same effect on shopping trip distance as lower prices, or if this will be still influenced by the nature of the goods sought for instance.

1.3 Thesis Structure

This thesis examines the membership identity of members of a consumer co-operative, and whether their identity as a member influences their behaviour as consumers. Where applicable, their behaviour is compared to the behaviour of non-members to provide a contrast. This thesis continues with a literature review outlining the three main areas of research that inform this thesis, geographies of retailing and consumption, identity studies, and co-operative studies, in chapter 2.

Chapter 3 outlines the methodology employed in this thesis, and the formulation of the research instrument. The Calgary Co-operative Association, the largest locally based retail co-operative in North America, was selected as the study site, and a brief history of the co-operative and current importance is also outlined. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the response rate and sample demographic characteristics.

Chapters 4 and 5 delve into the study results. Chapter 4 focuses on the overt consumer behaviour of members and non-members, examining aspects such as the frequency of visits to the Co-op over other stores, the location of member and non-member households, and the stores where the majority of household food purchases are made. Chapter 5 on the other hand, delves into the motivational and attitudinal aspects of consumer behaviour, examining difference between members and non-members with respect to importance of store attributes and other measures of store choice. Perhaps

most importantly, this chapter also examines membership in the Co-op, the level of involvement members have in their co-operative, reasons for becoming a member, and the level to which they identify as a member of the co-operative. Identification with the co-operative is then examined with respect to the consumer behaviour patterns underlined in Chapter 4. The findings discussed in both chapters will be linked back to current literature on consumer behaviour and identification throughout.

The thesis concludes with a review of the major findings of the research, in Chapter 6. In addition, important contributions of the research to consumption/retailing geographies, identity studies and co-operative studies will be outlined, along with the research limitations and future areas of research.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Geographies of retailing and consumption are growing areas of research in the broader discipline of geography. Research in these sub-disciplines focuses on aspects such as structural changes in the retailing environment, and how consumers interact with and negotiate through retail spaces. Areas of research that have already been examined include market area structures, consumer usage fields, the construction of identities through the act of consumption, and the feminization of retail spaces. As the retailing environment continues to change with the effects of globalization and changing technologies, research on how retailers adapt to change, and how consumers interact with the changing retail landscape, will continue to be fruitful.

Consumer co-operation is one retailing format which has been largely neglected as a topic of study in retailing and consumption geographies. As member-owned business entities, consumer co-operatives exist primarily to serve the needs of their members. However, these organizations may also exist in the same business environment as private retailing operations. They are facing changes both external to their organization, and internal, to which they must adapt in order to survive in the future. Market restructurings, the speed of adoption of new technologies, more efficient competition, and in some cases, dwindling market shares are impacting the ability of consumer co-operatives to compete in the larger retail sector. To meet some of these

trends, some co-operatives seek to become more efficient, achieving greater scale, making better use of technology, and accessing market capital in order to compete with multinational operations. In other cases, there is concern that a declining emphasis on the associational aspects of co-operative organizations such as newsletters and member educational programs is resulting in a co-operative identity which is less differentiated from that of private businesses, potentially leading to declining member commitment and loyalty and potentially weakening member identities with the co-operative. Some co-operative leaders and analysts worry that this decline could prove detrimental to co-operative organizations in the future, as member-owned organizations which rely on the patronage of their members in order to succeed. Thus, it is important to gain a better understanding of membership identity, and how this impacts consumer behaviour.

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a background for an examination of the implications of consumer identities, with a particular focus on membership identities in a consumer co-operative. The chapter is structured as follows. First, the literature encapsulated under the rubric of retailing and consumption geographies will be examined, considering both traditional and newer research perspectives. Secondly the chapter will briefly discuss some of the research on identity theory, highlighting the contributions of this literature to an examination of identity in a member-based organization. Thirdly the chapter will move to an examination of the literature on co-operative studies. In this section a brief history of the development of consumer co-operation will be given, followed by the current challenges co-operatives, in particular, consumer co-operatives are facing to survive. Following this, the identified gaps in the literature in these areas will be discussed. The paper will conclude with a discussion of

the importance behind examining the spatial implications of consumer co-operative identity, and the benefits of taking a geographic perspective.

2.2 Retailing and Consumption Geographies

The sub-disciplines of retailing and consumption geography are two growing areas of research, both in terms of actual research projects, and in terms of the range of themes examined and methodologies utilized. Neil Wrigley and Michelle Lowe, commonly recognized as two prominent researchers in the field of retail geography have devised a means of organizing the research encapsulated in these two sub disciplines. They have divided the research themes into two broad areas: ‘orthodox’ and ‘new’ geographies of retailing and consumption (Wrigley and Lowe, 1996; 2002; Lowe and Wrigley, 2000). As these divisions are commonly known and are useful for organizing this discussion; they will be utilized below.

2.2.1 Orthodox geographies of retailing and consumption

‘Orthodox’ geographies of retailing and consumption can be broadly defined as those studies/research conducted before the 1990’s. Nicholas Blomley (2000), another prominent retail geographer, has identified this research as embodying the traditions of spatial science, thus primarily utilizing positivist science paradigms. It is important to note, however that this categorization only indicates a broad trend in retailing and consumption geography. As will be evidenced below, ‘spatial science’ studies continue to be undertaken and play an important part in retail and consumption geographical research. Within orthodox geographies of retailing and consumption, two major areas of

research emerge, the first surrounding location analyses and market structures; the second surrounding consumer behaviour and retailing.

Much attention has been placed on location analyses and market structures from both theoretical and applied perspectives. Theoretically, there has been a great deal of attention placed on developing models and theories related to the structure of the retail market at different scales, be they regional or intraurban. The prime example of an interest in retail structure is Walter Christaller's Central Place Theory (Potter, 1982; Parr, 1995). A major fault in theoretical models such as this one was that consumer behaviour was considered to be rational; that individuals would shop according to their rational needs and thus choose the closest market providing the cheapest cost (Potter, 1982). In a more applied sense, the ability to study and determine the prime location of stores, malls etc. is of interest to retail planners, market analysts, and stakeholders in the larger retail environment. Thus, there is a great deal of research in which methods and models are tested and applied to real-world retailing situations (Jones and Simmons, 1993; Wrigley, 1988).

Consumer behaviour is an important area of research, both in a practical sense and a theoretical sense, in that the retail sector is interested in better understanding the behaviour of individual consumers, and researchers are interested in such aspects as modeling consumer behaviour or the effect of differing variables on consumer behaviour (Golledge and Stimson, 1997). Other variables that have been tested with respect to consumer decision-making include shopping centre size and store variety (Oppewal, et al., 1997), and the store image or perception, to name a few examples (Golledge and Stimson, 1997).

Studies of behaviour in orthodox retailing and consumption geographies have also attempted to examine consumer cognition and perception of the retailing environment. For example, the knowledge consumers have of the retail outlets available to them within their immediate vicinity, and which they choose to frequent and which they do not, have been studied. These ‘consumer information fields’ have been compared to the demographic variables of the individual consumer such as age, income etc. It has been found that generally, consumers within a higher income level have a larger consumer information field than those in a lower bracket (Potter, 1982).

2.2.2 New geographies of retailing and consumption

Beginning in the 1990’s, orthodox studies began to be criticized for not taking its ‘economic or cultural geographies seriously’ (Crewe, 2000; p. 275). Criticisms of the ‘simplistic’ studies in retailing and consumption spurred the shift from orthodox to new geographies of retailing and consumption (Crewe, 2000; Blomley, 2000; Wrigley and Lowe, 1996). This shift also brought about the use of new methodologies in the study of retailing and consumption, with many of these studies employing ethnographic and mixed methodologies (Miller et al., 1998; Gregson, Longstaff and Crewe, 1997). Studies emerging from these new geographies of retailing and consumption examined retailing and consumption environments in innovative ways. Research themes that are evidenced in the current body of research include market restructuring and the development of new retailing forms; retailing forms previously neglected in retailing and consumption geographies; consumer landscapes; and consumer identity research. Each will be discussed in turn.

An important sub theme of retail and consumption geographies after the 1990's examined the rapid restructuring of the retail environment, and the impacts this had upon the concentration of retail capital (Wrigley and Lowe, 1996, 2002). Studies which have looked at restructuring have examined changes in retailing structure at international and local scales. For example, changes in regulatory regimes in both the United States and the United Kingdom have been theorized to allow retail giants to consolidate their operations, expand to international markets, and to penetrate retail operations at smaller scales, such as main streets, and to shift power in retailer/supplier relationships from the supplier to the retailer (Hankins, 2001; Wrigley, 2002; Marsden and Wrigley, 1996; Thomas and Bromley, 2003; Wood, 2002; Peron, 2001). In addition to this, new retailing forms which emerge from retail restructuring have been examined. The big box retailing phenomenon is a good example (Crewe, 2003; Wrigley and Lowe, 1996).

Studies in retail and consumption geographies have also moved from examining conventional retail spaces such as the store, mall or department store, to examining alternative spaces in which consumption processes take place. For example, some research has examined retailing in so-called 'captive markets', for example, gift shops in hospitals, airports and business parks (Wrigley and Lowe, 1996). Other research has examined alternative retailing forms outside of shops, malls and department stores. Colin Williams (2002) for instance has examined the motivations of consumers to utilize informal retail channels as a means of acquiring goods, such as carboot sales (i.e. garage sales).

There has also been considerable research into landscapes of consumption and how the physical retailing environment can be constructed and utilized by retailers to induce meaning and perhaps increased consumption in individuals (Crewe, 2003). For

example, John Goss has been active in researching contemporary built environments such as the mall, examining the features of mall design (lighting, temperature, decorative elements, exits), and their influence on the act of consumption (Goss, 1993). Another area of research has examined historical landscapes of consumption and how these have acted to shape contemporary retail practices. For example, Nicholas Blomley (1996) examined Emile's Zola's fictive novel titled *The Ladies' Paradise* in order to glean retailing practices utilized in 19th Century Paris, which paralleled a general rise in department store retailing. This novel is valued in the contemporary retail environment for its detail on the manipulation of retail space to induce consumption.

Related to consumption landscapes is the examination of relationships between consumption and the creation of identity. Many studies have looked historically at consumption identity. For instance, Mona Domosh (1996) has examined the construction of femininity in 19th century New York City department stores. Glennie and Thrift (1996) have also taken a historical perspective on the creation of identity through consumption in 19th century English retail spaces, citing them as both places in which to consume, and engage in social relations. Thus, Glennie and Thrift relate how identities are created among consumers via the products purchased, and via social activities within retail spaces.

There have also been studies of contemporary spaces and places and how identities have been constructed (Miller et al., 1998; Crewe and Lowe, 1995; Jackson and Holbrook, 1995). A particularly informative study was undertaken by Daniel Miller et al. (1998) in two shopping centres (Brent Cross and Wood Green) in North London. The research employed a mixed methodology, using focus groups, interviews and ethnographic methods in order to glean a better understanding of shopping and its

relationships to identity. This study provides interesting accounts of how individual consumers used shopping spaces as indicative of particular class or ethnic identities. For example, the study found that the Jewish women focus group tended to identify with the Brent Cross shopping centre. On the other hand, the group of Greek Cypriot youths in the study identified more closely with Wood Green.

What is important to note about the current literature in retailing and consumption geographies in research on identity is that they primarily examine the construction of identity through consumers' engagement of shopping spaces or commodities. There is a general lack of research on how people's social (so to speak, external) identities, such as membership in groups, influence their behaviour as consumers (one exception being Miller et al's (1998), study, which touches upon ethnic identity and how this influences the malls visited).

As already mentioned, there is little research in retailing and consumption geographies on how identity is constructed through membership. Identity in retailing and consumption geographies has been commonly researched in relation to the consumption of goods or through spaces of consumption (Miller et al, 1998; Crewe and Lowe, Jackson and Holbrook, 1995). Other geographic theories regarding the construction of identity have seen identity formation as rooted in place, through identification with a particular town, region or country, for instance (e.g. Yeager, 1996; Paasi, 2002).

There is some literature in the fields of social psychology, sociology, and marketing which has looked at the relationships between associational membership and identity. Research and literature in these areas have seen the possibility of a shared identity through membership in associations; participation in associations; and in

organizational situations such as work environments (Hogg and Terry, 2000, 2001; Hogg and Abrams, 1988; Tyler, 1999; Brown, 2001; Stoel, 2002). A sociologist, Tyler (1999) highlights many aspects of membership that may influence identity and consequently, co-operation within an organization. These would include the level at which individuals use their membership status for their identity, the level of social status of the association, the level of pride in being a member, and the commitment to the organization.

A sense of common identity among members of a particular group can have positive side benefits. For instance, Williams (2001) notes that a sense of membership in a group can increase the level of trust among individuals. In organizational contexts this can be particularly beneficial, as it reduces the need for formalized avenues of interaction among individuals, such as contracts.

In consumption circles membership identity can have positive outcomes. Bhattacharya et al. (1995) see member identity occurring when an individual has a 'sense of connectedness to an organization and defines him/herself in terms of the organization' (p. 46). This can be seen in increased loyalty to the organization, and decreased turnover. In addition, it can be seen in increased willingness to recommend a product in consumer studies. For instance, when asked, Saturn buyers said that they would recommend the car to others.

In a similar vein, marketing researcher Leslie Stoel (2002) highlighted group identity and its importance to the financial viability of a member-owned business in her research into group identity effects on the relationship between the consumer and the business. Her study dealt with the membership of a retail-owned hardware co-operative in the United States, where businesses join together in a co-operative to form a

wholesale distributor. Stoel discovered that the identification co-operative members had with the co-operative was not impacted by the size of the co-operative (i.e. the larger the co-operative became, the identification with the co-operative did not weaken). On the other hand, Stoel found that group identity had a positive effect on the perceived effectiveness of the relationship a member had with the co-operative. Stoel concluded by suggesting that co-operatives should work on strengthening identity, as this had an impact on the financial viability of the business.

The themes in the identity literature, in particular, Stoel's paper, have important implications for consumer co-operatives, where members are individual consumers. Understanding identity and the processes affecting its creation and change are important for consumer co-operatives, because it can be argued that their success impinges on how strongly their membership identifies with the co-operative. If members identify strongly with the co-operative, they are likely to increase participation in the co-operative. Realizing that co-operatives depend primarily for their success in the future upon the economic participation of their membership, it is important to have a better understanding of the interrelationship between identity and consumer behaviour. In doing this, however, it is also important to have a better understanding of consumer co-operation, the history of the movement, its development and its situation in the current retailing environment.

2.3 Consumer Co-operation, a Case Study in Retailing Geography

The chapter will now discuss co-operatives, in particular, consumer co-operatives. A co-operative, as defined by the International Co-operative Alliance (ICA) is '... an autonomous association of persons united voluntarily to meet their common

economic, social, and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly-owned and democratically-controlled enterprise.’ (ICA, 1996) As the definition says, a co-operative is at the same time both an association of persons and business enterprise used by the members. What is inherent in this definition is that the members of the co-operative, those persons who joined together to meet their common needs, benefit the most from the existence of the co-operative. In addition, the concepts of joint ownership and democratic control, which are encapsulated in the definition, separate co-operatives from other privately-run businesses, where the customers neither own nor have the right to any formal input into the operation of the business enterprise.

When national level studies of industry are undertaken co-operatives are often overlooked, primarily because they are rarely dominant enterprises, and because they are small compared to their competitors. Surprisingly however, co-operatives are a widespread format of business in today’s economies, and in particular regions and market segments they are important businesses that provide services to millions of people in North America and abroad. To underscore this, the Canadian Co-operative Association reports that in Canada, there are over 10,000 co-operatives providing services to over 10 million Canadians (CCA, 2006).

The most common co-operatives known to the general public include marketing co-operatives, financial co-operatives, and consumer co-operatives, the latter being the focus of this paper. Marketing co-operatives exist to act as a selling arm for their producer/members. In general, agricultural co-operatives have the largest business volumes and market shares of the major types of co-operatives. Financial co-operatives such as credit unions and caisses populaires (which exist in Francophone regions of Canada) serve as savings and loan institutions for their members. According to the

Credit Union Central of Canada, there are close to 1,200 credit unions and caisses populaires in Canada, in 3,500 locations, serving 11 million members in Canada, and having over 170 billion dollars in total assets (CUCC, 2006). Finally, consumer co-operatives (such as the Mountain Equipment Co-operative with two million members across Canada, or the Calgary Co-operative Association, with over four hundred thousand members in the city of Calgary), the primary focus of this article, exist to offer retail goods such as clothing or groceries to their member owners. Other common areas in which co-operatives can be found include housing co-operatives, electricity co-operatives and daycare co-operatives (Canadian Co-operative Association, 2003).

Consumer co-operatives first developed in England and parts of mainland Europe in the 18th-19th centuries, but the consumer co-operative considered to be the most influential to the development of an international movement was created in the United Kingdom in 1844. A group of labourers in Rochdale, England, known as the Rochdale Society of Equitable Pioneers, are considered to be the impetus of a worldwide co-operative movement. The Rochdale co-operative was successful both in gaining members and profits. This co-operative and other co-operatives formed under the inspiration of the success of Rochdale were instrumental in the creation of the Co-operative Wholesale Society, the first wholesale co-operative in the world. The Pioneers were also responsible for the formation of general practices and principles for co-operatives. The official principles of co-operation of the International Co-operative Alliance were known as the 'Rochdale Principles' for many years (Figure 2.1). Figure 2.1 lists the ICA principles as they are today. The Rochdale Pioneers also popularized the practice of distributing a dividend based on member patronage, a common model for many co-operatives today (Birchall, 1997; Furlough and Strikwerda, 1999).

Figure 2.1: Statement of Co-operative Identity

The Statement of Co-operative Identity (MacPherson, 1995) is the most recent, official interpretation of what it means to be a co-operative. It is based on a 200 year old body of co-operative thought, including principles and practices first put forth by the Rochdale Pioneers.

Definition

A co-operative is an autonomous association of persons united voluntarily to meet their common economic, social and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly-owned and democratically-controlled enterprise.

Values

Co-operatives are based on the values of self-help, self-responsibility, democracy, equality and solidarity. In the tradition of their founders, co-operative members believe in the ethical values of honesty, openness, social responsibility and caring for others.

1st Principle: Voluntary and Open Membership

Co-operatives are voluntary organizations, open to all persons able to use their services and willing to accept the responsibilities of membership, without gender, social, racial, political or religious discrimination.

2nd Principle: Democratic Member Control

Co-operatives are democratic organizations controlled by their members, who actively participate in setting their policies and making decisions. Men and women serving as elected representatives are accountable to the membership. In primary co-operatives members have equal voting rights (one member, one vote) and co-operatives at other levels are also organized in a democratic manner.

3rd Principle: Member Economic Participation

Members contribute equally to, and democratically control, the capital of their co-operative. At least part of that capital is usually the common property of the co-operative. Members usually receive limited compensation, if any, on capital subscribed as a condition of membership. Members allocate surpluses for any or all of the following purposes: developing their co-operative, possibly by setting up reserves, part of which at least would be indivisible, benefiting members in proportion to their transactions with the co-operative; and supporting other activities approved by the membership.

4th Principle: Autonomy and Independence

Co-operatives are autonomous, self-help organizations controlled by their members. If they enter into agreements with other organizations, including governments, or raise capital from external sources, they do so on terms that ensure democratic control by their members and maintain their co-operative identity.

5th Principle: Education, Training and Information

Co-operatives provide education and training for their members, elected representatives, managers and employees so they can contribute effectively to the development of their co-operatives. They inform the general public- particularly young people and opinion leaders- about the nature and benefits of co-operation.

6th Principle: Co-operation among Co-operatives

Co-operatives serve their members most effectively and strengthen the co-operative movement by working together through local, national, regional and international structures.

7th Principle: Concern for Community

Co-operatives work for the sustainable development of their communities through policies approved by their members.

Consumer co-operatives have spread from this humble beginning in Great Britain to be located in many countries, around the world providing a multitude of products and services offered by co-operatives of all sizes. Consumer co-operatives are somewhat regionalized entities across the globe, where there are countries, or regions in countries with strong and visible co-operative movements, and some regions where co-operatives are not strongly developed.. Countries with highly developed consumer co-operative movements include Japan, Great Britain and Switzerland, and societies in these countries have been, overall, successful in the current retailing environments in their respective countries. For example, consumer co-operatives in the United Kingdom account for approximately 6 percent of the food market share in the country, which is quite considerable given the extremely aggressive food retailing environment in Great Britain, where top food retailers include Tesco, Sainsbury, Asda and Safeway (Union of Co-operative Enterprises, 2003).

Canada provides another good example of where consumer co-operatives are prominent. There are regions in Canada in which co-operatives are organized in a federated system, where the local co-operative businesses in essence own the federated wholesale. In the west, Federated Co-operatives Limited supplies and distributes goods and other administrative services to its member co-operatives in British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and northern Ontario (FCL, 2003). Co-op Atlantic is an integrated system of consumer (and other) co-operatives in the Maritime Provinces (Co-op Atlantic, 2003). Arctic Co-operatives Limited supplies its member co-operatives the Northwest Territories, Nunavut and northern Manitoba (Arctic Co-operatives, 2003). Two regions in which consumer co-operatives are not integrated at the scale seen in these three regions are Ontario and Quebec. There are consumer co-operatives in these

two provinces, however they are not integrated and have minor impact on urban areas (Canadian Co-operative Association et al., 2000). The exception to this generalization in Quebec is the Fédération des Coopératives du Nouveau-Québec, which provides many services including product wholesaling to its 13 member co-operatives in northern Quebec (Inuit Business Directory, 2006)

While consumer co-operatives in Canada and other countries have survived and in some instances continued to grow both financially and in terms of actual membership, at the international scale consumer co-operatives are not as strong as they were at one time and many have faced challenges to their survival. Some consumer co-operatives have successfully adapted to face these challenges; others have failed, and either suffered financially or disappeared altogether. There has been considerable research done on the problematic issues facing co-operatives in many areas of the world. Co-operative societies and movements that have been investigated include the decline of the Consumers Cooperative of Berkeley (CCB) in the United States in the 1980's (Fullerton, 1992). Other documented 'failures' of consumer co-operation include the dramatic decline of the consumer co-operative movement in France (Schediwy, 1989), and setbacks in the Dutch and Belgian co-operative movements (Saxena and Craig, 1990). In the late 1980's the consumer co-operative movements in western Germany and Austria essentially collapsed (Fairbairn, 1999). In Canada there have not been failures of this level, however in 1993 the Edmonton Co-op Association ceased operating (Fairbairn, 2004).

As already briefly evidenced, the consumer co-operative movement has been the focus of a great deal of literature. Historical pieces of research have focused on many aspects of the development of consumer co-operation in various regions across the

globe. For instance researchers have investigated the historical rise of consumer co-operation in western Canada (Fairbairn, 1989); the use of consumer co-operative development in the social and economic improvement of the disadvantaged classes in regions such as Austria (Hauch, 1999); and the interrelationships between consumer co-operation and the development of working class movements in the 19th and 20th centuries. For example there has been considerable historical analysis of British consumer co-operatives and their impact on the growing solidarity of the working class in the 19th century (Gurney, 1996). Consumer co-operatives developed primarily among the working classes in Great Britain, as an alternative to the pricy and adulterated goods commonly found in private shops at that time. According to Gurney (1996), consumer co-operatives provided the working class with an alternative culture, where associational and educational events and services provided through co-operatives, such as tea parties, co-operative educational events; reading rooms and libraries; and the publication of newspapers such as the *Co-operative News*, provided working class persons with a common identity and sense of belonging.

Much of the contemporary literature in the area of co-operative studies has focused on describing the challenges facing consumer co-operatives. This research/literature commonly employs a case study perspective, examining particular co-operative societies around the world (Birchall, 2000; International Joint Project on Co-operative Democracy, 1995; Craig, 1995; Saxena and Craig, 1990; Brazda and Schediwy, 1989). This research is interdisciplinary, encompassing research from sociologists, political scientists, economists, and so on. What is surprising is that despite its interdisciplinary scope, there has been little geographic perspective in co-operative studies; this limitation will be discussed in more detail in a later section.

As already mentioned, much of the current literature in this field focuses on the challenges to consumer co-operative survival in the future. Murray Fulton and Julie Gibbings (2000) have examined similar factors impinging upon the future success of agricultural co-operatives in Canada, and the way in which they have classified these factors, as both internal and external to the co-operative, will prove useful in organizing the factors described here. External factors would include such things as market restructuring and increased competition; factors which are at play in the larger retail sector of which consumer co-operatives are a part. Internal factors on the other hand are at play within the organization itself and would include such aspects as member commitment and loyalty, and visibility of the co-operative difference. Each of these factors will be discussed in turn below.

In the external retailing environment, much of the co-operative studies research suggests that co-operatives have had to deal with many changes in the way that retailing is carried out. Overall, the retailing sector has undertaken a significant amount of restructuring, which is also a sub-theme of research in retailing and consumption geographies. This restructuring can be identified through the increased consolidation of retail competitors, the adoption of new technologies such as electronic point of sale technology and warehouse-management systems, and the penetration of new markets both at an international level and at the national level (Sparks, 2002; Lian, 2002; Davis, 2001; Hammond-Ketilson, 1988). Sparks (2002) provides an excellent example of market penetration at the local scale in the UK, when he relates the move of retail giant Sainsbury's to using multiple store formats, in contrast to the traditional superstore format. This shift enabled Sainsbury's to compete in smaller rural areas, traditional footholds for consumer co-operatives in the United Kingdom.

As evidenced in the example above, these changes result in stronger private competition for consumer co-operatives, as these private retailers are often larger than locally-owned and operated retail co-operatives. In addition, these private retailers are more increasingly cost effective (more efficient at achieving economies of both scale and scope) (Sparks, 2002). Private retailers are also more efficient at accumulating capital to fund further expansions and retailing improvements than consumer co-operatives, whose ability to accumulate capital (outside of acquiring loans) often rests on the retention of profits generated by member patronage. This increased cost efficiency also means that the private competition can offer goods at lower prices than the consumer co-operative (Webb, 2000).

Quite often the end result of this restructuring has been a reduction of market share for consumer co-operatives in various countries (Wilks, 1998; Lian, 2002; Davis, 2001; Sparks, 2002; Saxena and Craig, 1990; Brazda and Schediwy, 1989). Some co-operatives are adapting to these problems by merging or centralizing their operations and adopting the use of new technologies (Fulton, 2002). An example of this activity is provided by a number of local struggling consumer co-operatives in the Atlantic Provinces. Faced with competition from multinational competitors which were active in predatory pricing, 28 retail co-operatives made the decision to merge into one co-operative, now called the Consumers Community Co-operative (CCC). This allowed them to centralize many of their administrative functions, such as legal services and financial services, which in turn allowed for a reduction in overhead costs (Webb, 2000). However, it is uncertain if this type of adaptation will be profitable in the long term future. There are signs that this merger is failing, after reports surfaced in January of 2006 that CCC was closing 8 of its co-ops in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince

Edward Island, and Newfoundland due to mounting losses (“Eight Co-op Grocery Stores Closing,” 2006).

In other cases, co-operatives have been meeting the competition by supporting more decentralized structures, in which co-operatives are organized within a federation. In western Canada this is a strategy that has been very successful for consumer co-operatives. The majority of consumer co-operatives in western Canada jointly own and control Federated Co-operatives Limited, a wholesale co-operatives that provides food, petroleum, hardware and agricultural supplies to its member co-operatives (Fairbairn, 2004, 1989). Through their wholesale retail consumer co-operatives in western Canada and parts of Ontario and Manitoba receive retail supplies, and petroleum products, but in addition, Federated provides services to its member retails such as advertising and marketing. FCL also assists in renovations of its members’ stores, helping smaller co-operatives in the system to stay competitive. Another enormous benefit of the system is the Consumers Co-operative Refineries, in Regina, which is owned by FCL, and provides gas and other petroleum products. Last year Federated redistributed \$266 million of its \$463 million net profit to its member retails (Lyons, 2006). By working together through FCL, local consumer co-operatives still maintain their autonomy yet benefit by purchasing products and receiving services as a federation.

On the other hand, some consumer co-operatives have not been successfully adapting to the changes in the retail environment and have struggled or gone bankrupt altogether. Brazda and Schediwy (1989) published a two-volume study of consumer co-operative societies (primarily) in Western Europe. This edited publication charted the paths of consumer co-operation in these countries, making comment of the strengths and weaknesses of co-operatives in each country, highlighting that there is a growing crisis

in consumer co-operation. France was one of the countries in which consumer co-operatives has drastically declined, and this is partly attributed by the author (Schediwy, 1989) to the inability of co-operatives in this country to keep abreast of retail changes in the co-operative environment.

In addition to external factors influencing the success of consumer co-operatives, some internal factors have been cited in the research as important to future survival. Despite having a dual character as both associations of people and businesses, the response of the management in some co-operatives to increased competition has been to focus their energies on this competition, and thus to place the emphasis on the business aspect of the co-operative. Some of the associational aspects of co-operative activity that may decline can include member newsletters, member feedback committees in the co-operative, educational programs for the membership, and so on. In addition, where some co-operatives have been able to grow both in terms of the scale of their operations and the number of their membership, some co-operative researchers believe that this could lead to a decline in member commitment (Soumela, 1991; Birchall, 2000; Kurimoto, 1999). I have not been able to find literature which empirically tests this claim, but it is a worry regularly voiced by co-operative leaders.

A general awareness among members and the public of the structural and ideological differences between co-operatives and the private retailers is also an issue for the future success of consumer co-operatives. The principles of the co-operative movement, already listed above, are ideally supposed to differentiate co-operatives, in this case consumer co-operatives, from the competition. If utilized in the right manner, adherence to these principles could be potentially advantageous to consumer co-operatives as a means of creating an image to convey to the wider public (Pestoff, 1999;

Birchall, 2000; International Joint Project on Co-operative Democracy, 1995). Sparks (2002) notes that this has also been the focus of an industry-wide study into the consumer co-operative movement (Co-operative Commission) in the UK.

With increased attention placed on keeping in tune with the competition, some researchers have noted that a lack of differentiation between consumer co-operatives and private retailers may damage the relationships between the co-operatives and their members.¹ If the difference between co-operatives and private retailers is not stressed by co-operative retailers, consumers have little incentive to become members and, perhaps, more importantly, members have little reason to shop solely at the co-operative. This can affect how the member identifies with the co-operative, and in this sense, it is important to the future existence of consumer co-operation.

2.4 Identified Gaps in the Literature

While there is a breadth of research in the three areas of retail/consumption geography, membership identity and co-operative studies, there are some gaps in the current body of knowledge that need to be addressed. First, geographers have made very little contribution to research on consumer co-operatives. Martin Purvis, an historical geographer in Great Britain, is the only geographer (that I have been able to identify thus far) who has conducted any research on consumer co-operatives. His area of research was in charting the historical geographical aspects of consumer co-operation in Britain and in Europe (Purvis, 1998a; 1998b; 1998c). In addition, Leigh Sparks, now a business school professor who has contributed to looking at the future state of U.K.

¹ The tendency of consumer co-operatives to become more like the competition has been called *mimetic isomorphism* by Birchall (2000).

consumer co-operation, has an educational background in geography (Lowe and Wrigley, 2002). Other than these two academics, geographers have contributed little to co-operative studies.

As well, there is little research which explicitly addresses the impact of membership identity on consumer behaviour. While Miller et al.'s (1998) research into shopping and identity briefly touched on group identity (ethnic, gender and age-related groupings) and consumption, most of the geographical studies investigating identity and consumption investigated the construction of identity via consumption landscapes, or through consumer commodities.

With respect to co-operative research, there has been a general lack of research into the perspectives and attitudes of the membership in relation to their co-operative in the academic literature. Research into these relationships has been undertaken, but it is often conducted by the co-operatives themselves, but it is often not released to the general public or academic community. Much of the academic research in this area has addressed the issues challenging co-operative businesses from the perspective of the co-operative, highlighting as particular examples which co-operatives have successfully adapted to changes, and which have not. Some studies have investigated membership in agricultural co-operatives, (e.g. Nes, 1999; Fulton and Giannakas, 2001). In addition some research attention has focused on consumer co-operatives (Leblanc and Nguyen, 2001; Sommer, 1998; Sommer et al., 1983; Al-Awadi, 2002). Given the importance of member economic participation to the viability of co-operative-based retailing, additional research on members' consumer behaviour in co-operative organizations is merited.

2.6 Conclusions

The literature review has outlined three broad areas of research that are important to an understanding of membership identity and consumer behaviour: retail/consumption geography; group membership and identity; and co-operative studies. Research related to co-operative consumer behaviour and membership identity is beneficial for many reasons. It will contribute to the growing body of literature in retail and consumption geographies by highlighting the importance of membership identity in influencing consumer behaviour. Furthermore, it will contribute to the study of alternative retail formats in retailing and consumption geography, as consumer co-operatives have been largely neglected as a focus of research in geography.

Overall, an understanding of the relationship between membership identity and consumer behaviour will benefit both private retailers and the consumer co-operative movement. Firstly, private retailers will benefit from a better understanding of membership and behaviour, as there has been an increased use of loyalty schemes among retailers to maintain a loyal customer base. Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, in understanding how identity affects consumer behaviour, consumer co-operatives will be better prepared to face the challenges of the retailing environment in the future.

CHAPTER THREE: STUDY SITE AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter will provide an overview of the study site, the Calgary Co-operative Association (Shawnessy Store), and the rationale for its selection. It also outlines the methodology and questionnaire design. The chapter concludes with a brief discussion of the response rate and sample demographics.

3.2 Calgary Co-operative Association: History, Context and Store Site Selection

The site chosen for this research was the Calgary Co-operative Association. Because the Calgary Co-op is a partner in the SSHRC research project titled “Co-operative Membership and Globalization: Creating Social Cohesion Through Market Relations,” being conducted by the Centre for the Study of Co-operatives, this particular co-operative was chosen for the setting of this research. The established research relationship between the Calgary Co-operative and the Centre for the Study of Co-operatives made it easier to gain access to co-operative customers.

The Calgary Co-operative Association is situated in one of Canada’s most economically prosperous and fastest growing Canadian cities (Figure 3.1). With a population of over 870,000 people Calgary is the sixth largest city in Canada (Statistics Canada, 2005). Calgary, Alberta is located near the Rocky Mountains, in Alberta’s

ranch country, and is the hub of the province's immensely profitable petroleum industry (International Joint Project on Co-operative Democracy, 1995).

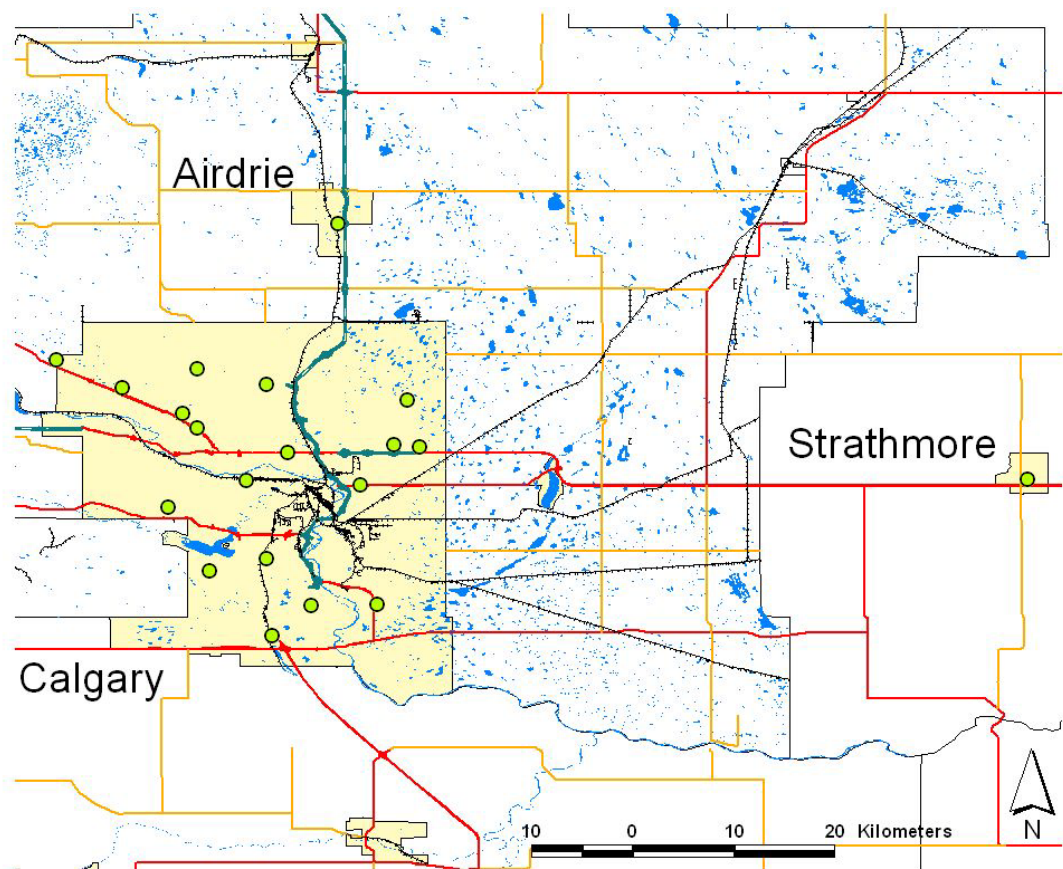
Figure 3.1: Calgary, Alberta



The Calgary Co-operative Association was formed in 1956, and in its first year of operation, had over 1000 members and a 3 percent rebate for member purchases (Fairbairn, 1989). Following this first year, the Co-op grew in size and increased in members and profit. For instance, by 1961, five years after the grand opening, there were 9000 members; by 1963 the Co-op had in excess of \$6 million in sales and continued with a three percent refund for member purchases (Fairbairn, 1989). Presently the Co-op's main focus is grocery retailing, although it has expanded to

include liquor, gasoline and travel services. In its 2005 Annual Report the Co-op reported having over 405,000 members, and 20 food centres, 23 gas bars, 14 liquor stores and 12 travel offices (see Figure 3.2 for a map of Co-op locations in Calgary and surrounding communities). It has also maintained economic success in extremely competitive grocery retail environment, with over \$815 million in sales, \$27.1million in earnings, and distributed over \$21 million dollars in patronage dividends to its members (Calgary Co-operative Association, 2005).

Figure 3.2: Store locations, Calgary Co-operative Association



The Calgary Co-operative Association was able to expand and be this successful through a policy of internal financing for expansion, aggressive siting strategies for new

stores development, and the support of its members and customers. Growth was done conservatively and overexpansion was avoided. The rule of thumb up to the 1980's was one new store per 30,000 people, and always in a defined district (Fairbairn, 1989). Beginning in the 1960's the Co-op began to actively involve itself in the city's neighbourhoods through such things as fundraising for local charities and the sponsorship of young people to co-operative youth camps. This had the effect of raising the profile of the co-operative in the surrounding community (Fairbairn, 1989). Structurally, the construction of new co-operative stores in Calgary neighbourhoods involved the input of local community associations; in addition they were to serve as the focal point of the local community (Fairbairn 1989).

Calgary Co-op's past was not always positive, and the association went through rough patches in its history. In 1998 and 1999, the Co-op faced a 'crisis' (Fairbairn, 2004, p. 151). The year prior in 1997, the Co-op's largest competitor, Safeway was faced with an employee strike that stopped operations for the retailer, and increased sales for the Co-op. The following year sales declined, but costs did not fall as much, and the Co-op began to lose money on its local operations.

At the same time that this was occurring, there was discontent among employees and many grievances were filed with upper management. Employees were organizing to unseat directors. There was negative feedback from employees on a restructuring process that moved individuals through various retail departments rather than allowing expertise to be built in one retail area.

The board, losing confidence in the Co-op's management, requested help from Federated Co-operatives, the co-op system's wholesale co-operative. Federated

management assisted Calgary Co-op with restructuring their operations. As Fairbairn (2004) describes it:

‘Within weeks the clean up team dispensed with more head office staff and twenty two middle managers in neighbourhood Co-op centres, reversed the management experiments, and contemplated more layoffs.’ (p. 153)

Through restructuring management channels, the Calgary Co-op was able to save approximately half a million dollars out of the structure. Since that time, they have slowly rebounded, and now are operating profitably (Fairbairn, 2004).

The Calgary Co-operative Association undertakes a series of initiatives to provide its members with news of the association, and to provide members with ways to become more involved. The Co-op has a website (www.calgarycoop.com), where interested persons can learn more about the Co-op, the benefits of membership, its locations, the services it provides, and gain access to the Co-op’s publications, including annual reports, and its newsletter, the *Co-op News*, which it publishes four times a year. The *Co-op News*, which is also available to members in the stores, provides messages from the board members and the CEO, notices of any meetings such as the annual general meeting, and the platforms of board member candidates, and any new developments in the Co-op such as the renovation and opening of any stores or gas bars. In their stores, the Co-op provides many services for members, such as community rooms in some of the stores, drop in services such as flu shots and health programs, and for children, the ‘Kiddie Korral,’ where children can play under supervision while parents shop. In some of the newer stores, there are even video screens placed throughout the store so parents can watch their children.

In addition, the Calgary Co-op has a Member Relations Committee, which includes both board members and members of the Co-op at large. The purpose of the

committee is to educate members about co-operatives and the Calgary Co-op specifically. It also provides a direct channel of communication between members and the board for any concerns that members may have about the direction of the Co-op. One initiative currently being undertaken by the committee is a youth membership drive, which is being approved in 2006 (Calgary Co-operative Association, 2005).

The Co-op is also active in the community at large. It offers many programs through its stores, such as the Bags to Riches program, where customers can re-use their bags and receive a 3 cent credit per bag toward their groceries or charity of choice. The Co-op also sponsors events such as the Annual Pancake Breakfast at the Calgary Stampede, golf tournaments where the proceeds go to charities, recycling programs in their stores for both books and newspapers, and supports non-profit organizations such as the Calgary Inter-Faith Food Bank (Calgary Co-operative Association, 2004).

Due to time and feasibility considerations, participants in the research were recruited through the Shawnessy Centre, one of 20 Calgary Co-op food stores. The Shawnessy Co-op is located in the southwest corner of the city of Calgary (Figure 3.2). The store was originally constructed in 1992, and since then has been one of the more profitable centres in the association (Figures 3.3, 3.4). The store was renovated in 2003, and now houses such services as a sushi bar, in store pizza oven and bakery, coffee area/cafeteria, and Kiddie Korral, among other things.

Figure 3.3: Exterior Image of Shawnessy store, Calgary Co-op



Figure 3.4: Interior images of Shawnessy store, Calgary Co-op



This particular store was chosen for three main reasons. First, the Shawnessy Co-op is in close proximity to other competing grocery stores. The Real Canadian Superstore, Safeway, and Walmart, which has a grocery aisle, are all in the same shopping area as the Shawnessy Co-op. It was hoped that this would reveal the ‘competing stores’ element to members’ loyalty, and this may be more apparent in questionnaire responses from Shawnessy Co-op patrons. Secondly, this store is one of the larger and busier of the Calgary Co-operative centres, making it easier to distribute a larger number of questionnaires within one week of surveying. Finally, because a scholar at the Centre for the Study of Co-operatives had an established research relationship with the manager of the Shawnessy store (Terry Singer), it made contact and entry into the store feasible.

Another benefit to surveying in this store was revealed after speaking to Singer about the possibilities of conducting the research in Shawnessy. He noted that the demographic of this particular store was particularly diverse, when compared to the member/customer base of other Co-op centres. The customer base is a wide demographic, having both a mix of older and younger customers, as well as single person households, and households with children. Capturing the perspectives of customers from a wider demographic is important when looking at co-operative identity, as there may be a difference between different types of members.

It is important to note the potential biases that may be present in the results from studying the Calgary Co-op. First, it is very large and very successful consumer co-operative, and this may influence the answers that members and non-members provide. In terms of its size, this may make it more difficult for members to differentiate the Co-op from its competitors and it might make it more difficult for members to understand

how the Co-op is different. In addition to this, as a member of Federated Co-operatives, which provides all of its member co-ops with Co-op brand products and standardized promotional materials including labeled shopping bags, members may perceive the Co-op as a brand name, and as a part of a larger chain of stores. This is something however that warrants further research in the future.

Furthermore, its success in the city of Calgary may skew members' perceptions of their co-op. It has already been noted that the level of pride in an association influences an individual's identity with the organization and consequently their willingness to co-operate with it (Tyler, 1999). However, again, this may warrant more research, for instance if members' identity with their co-operative is influenced when the co-op is not operating as successfully.

3.3 Measurement of Member and Non-Member Shopping Behaviour

Over the week of August 13 (Friday), to August 19 (Thursday), 2004, customers (members and non-members) of the Calgary Co-operative Association, at the Shawnessy Centre were asked to participate in the research. Self-administered questionnaires were distributed to 1,116 customers of the Shawnessy Co-op over the week of August 13-19th. Table 1 shows a tally of the times surveyed in the Calgary Co-op store, and the number of surveys distributed through the week. Varying the times spent surveying in the store ensures that a wider range of shoppers is contacted (e.g. 'late night shoppers' vs. 'early morning shoppers', etc). Surveying throughout each day of the week was another means of reaching many types of customers.

Table 3.1: Sampling Grid, August 13-19, 2004

	Friday, Aug 13	Saturday, Aug 14	Sunday, Aug 15	Monday, Aug 16	Tuesday, Aug 17	Wednesday, Aug 18	Thursday, Aug 19
TIME	3 p.m to 7 p.m.	10 a.m. to 6 p.m.	10 a.m to 7 p.m.	11 a.m. to 2 p.m.	9:30 a.m. to 7 p.m.	9 a.m. to 8:30 p.m.	10 a.m. to 9:30 p.m.
SURVEYS	79	175	175	83	185	200	219

One of the major difficulties with selecting a representative sample of Co-op customers is that it is impossible to know precisely how many people shop at the store. The sample for this research was based on the average number of customers that shop at the Shawnessy Co-op in a week. On average, 7,000 customers shop at the Shawnessy Co-op in a given week (Singer, personal conversation, July 2004). This number was entered into NCS Pearson's sample size calculator (<http://www.pearsonnccs.com/research/sample-calc.htm>), and at a 5% standard of error, and 95% level of confidence, 364 responses were needed. Given that there is normally a 30% response rate for mail surveys, it was determined that approximately 1,200 surveys needed to be distributed over the span of one week.

Because it was not feasible to conduct a pilot of the questionnaire among members of the Calgary Co-operative itself, the instrument was reviewed by academics at the Centre for the Study of Co-operatives, and the Department of Geography. In addition, the survey was pre-tested by fellow graduate students and acquaintances.

The questionnaire itself was a series of closed and open-ended questions. The questions for this survey were developed through a review of the literature on consumer co-operatives, retailing and consumption geographies, and identity. Consumer behaviour literature from the areas of marketing and consumer behaviour was also examined for potential questions.

A cover letter introducing the research to the participant, and indicating my contact information was provided as a preamble to the questionnaire (Appendix A). The content of the questionnaire fell under 6 primary categories (see Appendix B). The first section asked about respondents' consumer behaviour in terms of where they shopped for their groceries, the frequency of which they shopped at these places, and where they are located in the city. Respondents were asked to provide the locations of both their household and workplace either through postal code or nearest street location and the approximate time taken to travel to grocery stores. They were also asked to rate aspects of their consumer behaviour using Likert scale questions.

The second section evaluated the respondents' shopping preferences. After being asked to list important attributes in choosing a grocery store, respondents were asked to rate the importance of various statements related to a shopping environment. These included amenities offered, the quality of the physical environment, quality of products and services provided, and ease of shopping. In the third section respondents were asked to provide their reasons for shopping at the Shawnessy Co-op, and to rate the importance of a series of statements about the Co-op. These statements followed the same theme and format as the statements in the previous section, allowing for a comparison between the respondents' ideal shopping experience and the shopping experience at the Co-op.

The fourth and fifth sections focussed on Calgary Co-op members. The fourth section asked respondents to rate their level of participation in various Co-op activities such as reading newsletters and annual reports, attending annual general meetings, and other such activities. Members were asked to rate a series of statements related to their

identification with the co-operative in the fifth section. In addition, they were asked to explain why they became a member of the Co-op.

In the final section of the questionnaire respondents were asked to provide personal information, such as their age, gender, years a member of the Co-op, highest level of education, level of grocery expenditure per month, etc. In addition, respondents were asked to describe themselves using nouns, to see if they use any identifiers such as 'co-op member,' 'owner,' etc. Room was also provided in this section for respondents to write any comments or suggestions with respect to the survey.

Respondents were recruited for the research as they exited the store after their grocery shopping trip. In order to ensure a representative sample, the first person who exited the store was contacted, after that, each consecutive person who exited was contacted, and so on.

To achieve a higher response rate the questionnaire was a take-home survey, where participants could fill out the survey at their convenience, and send it back in a provided postage paid envelope. Similar surveys which asked respondents to fill out research instruments while in the store reported lower response rates (Pak and Pol, 1995). Also included in the questionnaire packet for this research was a raffle form for a \$50 gift certificate from the Co-op, which could be sent in with a (completed) survey. This was intended to help to increase the response rate to the questionnaire.

Marketing researchers Sukgoo Pak and Louis Pol (1995) speak of the difficulties of obtaining a high response rate when doing in-store data collection. For instance, it is often problematic for researchers to obtain much information from hurried respondents either on their way into or leaving the store, as research instruments have to be kept brief. In addition, the interview is often disrupted by other individuals in the store,

leading to distractions for the respondent. Furthermore, the response rate for exit/entry surveys is often quite low, and the ability to obtain follow up is somewhat limited.

In order to remedy this, Pak and Pol have suggested and tested a method which calls for initial contact in the grocery store, followed by either a telephone survey with the participant, or self-administered mail questionnaire. In this way, more data can be garnered in a relatively distraction-free environment. Pak and Pol have found that using either of these methods has significantly increased response rates for questionnaires.

For the purposes of this research a similar methodology was used for data collection. Potential participants were contacted systematically as they exited the store, and asked to participate in survey. This way, participants could place the survey in their grocery bags as they left the store, rather than having to hold the survey while they shopped. It may have also helped reduce the number of surveys that were left behind in the store.

3.4 Data Analysis

Because the data generated from the questionnaire was both qualitative and quantitative in nature, two types of analyses had to be conducted. The responses to open-ended questions were analyzed qualitatively; the close-ended quantitatively. In terms of the qualitative responses from the questionnaires, these were entered into a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet, and aggregated into broader themes. These themes were quantified (i.e. how many members versus non members mentioned price as a motivator for shopping at the Co-op), and where applicable, individual quotations were used to underscore the findings, and supplement the findings in the quantitative data.

The quantitative data from the surveys were entered into SPSS for ease of analysis. Descriptive statistics were compiled, such as means and standard deviations of the demographic variables. In addition, basic cross tabulations of the status of membership with much of the different data sets was conducted to glean any relationships between the behaviour and membership.

Due to much of the data being collected at nominal and ordinal intervals, much of the analysis was restricted to chi-square analyses and Mann-Whitney U-tests. In particular, Chi-Square was used to test for a relationship between membership and where participants were shopping for the majority of their groceries and the number of times spent shopping at one particular store in the span of a week. Where there were too many cells in the data matrix to conduct a proper chi-square analysis, the analysis was restricted to cross tabulations, and gleaning a relationship between the different variables.

Mann-Whitney U-Tests were used to statistically test for differences between members/non-members, and the Likert statements provided throughout the questionnaire. It is a non-parametric alternative to the t-test, and was used because then the data need not be normally distributed. For those statements where only members were asked to rate (such as the member identity statements), comparisons were made between those who shopped primarily at the Co-op, and those who shopped primarily at other grocery stores. Descriptive statistics calculated on the Likert statements included the mean and modal values for each statement as well as the variance and standard deviation.

In order to test for the influence of high identification on shopping behaviour, members were grouped into categories based on the average response on all 6 of the

identity statements. These statements were recommending membership to others, recommending shopping at the Co-op to others, feeling that other members have the same values and interests as they did, that the Co-op was like a community, and that the Co-op was part of their community.

An overall average was calculated across the identity statements for each member. Once these values were calculated, members were grouped into high identifiers (average response on statements higher than 7-10), medium identifiers (5-6), and low identifiers (1-4). Once this was done these identity categorizations were crosstabulated with the behaviour/store loyalty responses to see if there was a relationship between shopping behaviour and identification.

The locational data (i.e. street intersection data and household postal code data) was entered into a geographic information system (ArcMap) in order to examine the difference between member and non-member trip distances. The locational data also helped to visualize member and non-members that were traveling from further distances to shop at the co-operative, and to separate those households from the larger group for a more in-depth examination. In addition, it provided a visual pattern of the other stores that individuals in the survey shopped for their groceries.

3.5 Response Rate and Sample Demographic Characteristics

This section will provide a brief look into the demographic makeup of the sample. In total, there were 433 returned surveys out of a total of 1116 distributed. The response rate for the survey was 33%, slightly above the average response rate for mail back questionnaires.

In terms of Co-op membership, 91% of respondents were members¹, versus 9% who were non-members. While this may seem to be overly represented by members of the co-operative, these numbers are consistent with the numbers of members and non-members shopping at the Shawnessy Co-op. The manager of the Shawnessy Co-op, Terry Singer, noted that about 10% of customers at the Co-op weren't members (personal conversation, July 2004). A high percentage of Co-op membership may be due to the fact that in order to receive discounts at the Calgary Co-op, you need to have a member card.

Table 3.1 highlights the basic demographic characteristics of the survey respondents, disaggregated by Co-op member, and non-member. For ease of comparison the percentages were delimited by member and non-member. The data indicates that there were no strong demographic differences between members and non-members. Overall, the sample was predominately female (76.7% of members, 78.9% of non-members). The average length of membership for Co-op members was 17 years.

In addition, the sample was primarily middle-aged (between the ages of 35-54, 48.4% of members, 52.6% of non-members). While Co-ops are typically stereotyped as having an older demographic, Fairbairn (2004) suggests that this is actually not the case. He highlights that, for the Saskatoon Co-op, over the last 15 years, 65% of new members were between the ages of 21-45, and that the demographics for other urban

¹ Since family members may use the card/membership of another family member, these percentages represent the number of households in which one member belongs to the co-op (not necessarily the survey respondent). For the purposes of this thesis, households/respondents with a membership will be called members; those without, non-members. Respondents were also asked whether or not they personally held the membership, and there was still a high number of members, at 84.9% members, 15.1% non-members. Where necessary, households where the respondent is the primary cardholder will be compared to the responses of one who isn't.

consumer co-operatives have similar percentages. In Calgary, while the sample appears to be somewhat older, there is still some representation from younger people.

Overall, the majority of households in this sample were comprised of two or fewer persons, with over 60 percent (both member and non-member) of households reporting no children, and over 50 percent of households comprised of one or two persons. In addition, the majority of households have relatively high household incomes, however, there was a slightly larger percentage of Co-op members with incomes over \$60,000, as opposed to non-members.

To test for any relationships between co-operative membership and the demographic characteristics of the sample, chi-square tests were performed on the data. Chi square is a non-parametric test of the strength of the relationship between two variables (Babbie, 2001). It is a popular test in the social sciences because it is a non-parametric test, and it can be used with nominal data of this type. With the current sample, no statistically significant relationships were found between co-operative membership and the demographic make-up of the sample. In addition, for a few of the demographic variables, such as education, grocery expenditures per month, and number of individuals in the household, I was unable to perform chi-square because one of the restrictions for using the test is that at least 1/5 of the cells have a count of at least 5 observations (Ebdon, 1985).

Table 3.2: Selected demographic characteristics of population sample, disaggregated by co-operative membership

		Co-operative Member (N)	Non-Member (N)
Gender	Male	23.3% (90)	21.1% (8)
	Female	76.7% (297)	78.9% (30)
Education	Some high school	4.4% (17)	2.6% (1)
	Some university	15.9% (61)	10.5% (4)
	Other	22.7% (87)	21.1% (8)
	High school graduate	24.3% (93)	31.6% (12)
	University degree	32.6% (125)	34.2% (13)
Income	Less than \$30,000	13.3% (49)	19.4% (7)
	\$30,000-\$59,999	23.3% (86)	33.3% (12)
	\$60,000 or more	63.4% (234)	41.2% (17)
Grocery expenditures/month	Less than \$100	1.3% (5)	2.6% (1)
	\$100-\$300	21.3% (82)	26.3% (10)
	\$300-\$500	41% (158)	39.5% (15)
	\$500-\$700	23.4% (90)	18.4% (7)
	\$700 or more	12.7% (49)	13.2% (5)
Age	18-34	14% (54)	21.1% (8)
	35-54	48.4% (187)	52.6% (20)
	55+	37.6% (145)	26.3% (10)
Individuals in house	1	15.8% (62)	33.3% (13)
	2	40.1% (157)	28.2% (11)
	3	14.8% (53)	15.4% (6)
	4	21.9% (86)	12.8% (5)
	5	4.8% (19)	0% (0)
	6 or more	2.6% (10)	10.3% (4)
Children in house	Yes	34% (133)	36.8% (14)
	No	66% (258)	63.2% (24)

The next chapter will begin to delve into the behavioural aspects of co-operative membership, namely the overt shopping behaviour of members and non members. The number of times spent shopping at the Co-op versus other stores will be examined, as well, the store at which individuals spend the majority of their grocery dollars, an important indication of store loyalty. In addition, the locational data gathered through

the questionnaire will be presented in visual form, and examined for any strong differences between members and non-members.

CHAPTER FOUR: EXAMINING CO-OPERATIVE MEMBERSHIP AND BEHAVIOUR

4.1 Introduction

This chapter will start to uncover the relationships between identity and behaviour. This will be done by testing the first two of four hypotheses of this research, namely that *consumer co-operative members will be on average more likely to frequent the co-operative than non-members, and that co-operative members will be more willing to travel longer distances to shop at the co-operative*. These hypotheses focus on the shopping differences between members and non-members because it is assumed that if a member of the Co-op has a vested interest in the co-operative, that this will be evidenced in their overt consumer behaviour. Thus, it would be expected that their overt behaviour would be noticeably different from that of non-members. The behaviour patterns of members will then be compared to their identification with the co-operative in the next chapter.

Data collected in the survey instrument to test these first two hypotheses include the times spent shopping at the Co-op, and other grocery retailers; the store where the majority of grocery purchases are made; and locational data (street intersection and postal code) for both households and grocery stores. Another important segment of data collected is a series of statements designed to test participants' decision-making choices. More specifically, the statements examine whether member and non-member store

choice is based on price motivations, as in shopping at the stores with the best prices, and whether they use store flyers to decide where to shop for their grocery purchases. In contrast to this, participants also rated two statements that asked about their willingness to travel past other stores to shop at the Co-op, and vice versa. With these statements, it was hoped that consumer loyalty motives would begin to be uncovered, which could be further explored in subsequent sections of the survey questionnaire. Each data type was analyzed with particular emphasis placed on the differentiation of members and non-members.

4.2 Member and Non-Member Store Choice

A major aspect of many studies on consumer behaviour is the variety of stores consumers are frequenting for their shopping purchases, the amount of money spent in each store, the distance traveled to purchase goods, and the demographic characteristics of the shoppers in question (Rhee and Bell, 2002; O'Neill and Jasper, 1992; Wright, 1999). In the survey, respondents were asked a series of questions related to where they shop for their groceries, at the Calgary Co-op, other co-operatives in the city, and other stores. They were prompted to indicate how many times per week they shopped for groceries, at the Co-op and other stores mentioned. When stores other than the Shawnessy Co-op were mentioned, respondents were asked to provide the nearest street intersection, so that these stores could be located in the city.

Because respondents were initially asked how many times they shopped at the Co-op and not the Shawnessy location specifically, a follow up question was added. Respondents were asked more specifically whether or not the Shawnessy store was the Co-op store they visited most often. If it wasn't, they were asked to provide the name of

the store (e.g. Oakridge, Forest Lawn), and the nearest street intersection. When asked if the Co-op they shopped at the most was the Shawnessy Co-op, 85% (368) of respondents said yes, while 15% (64) of respondents noted another Calgary Co-op store.

Table 4.1 shows the number of shopping trips respondents make to both the Co-op, and to other stores, disaggregated by members and non-members. Comparing the number of times members and non-members choose to shop at the Co-op versus other stores is used as an indicator of loyalty to a particular store, because the frequency of shopping at a store is often used to test the level of loyalty (Wright, 1999)

Table 4.1: Shopping trips per week to Co-op and to other stores

		Member	Non-Member
<i>Times/week shopping at the Co-op</i>	Once a week or less	55.7% (215)	74.4% (29)
	Two to three times a week	37.3% (144)	20.5% (8)
	Four times a week or more	7.0% (27)	5.1% (2)
Total		100% (386)	100% (39)
Chi Square	X= 5.122 Significance=0.077		
<i>Times/week shopping at other stores</i>	Once a week or less	79.2% (308)	76.9% (30)
	Two to three times a week	18.3% (71)	20.5% (8)
	Four times a week or more	2.6% (10)	2.5% (1)
Total		100% (389)	100% (39)
Chi Square	X =0.121 Significance= 0.941		

Looking at Table 4.1, non-members are choosing to visit the Co-op less frequently than members, with over 74% of non-members visiting once a week or less.

For Co-op members, on the other hand, 55% of members are choosing to shop at the Co-op once a week or less. As for more frequent visits (2 or more times a week), Co-op members are visiting the Co-op more often than non-members, with over 42% of members visiting two or more times a week, compared to 25% of non-members. Based on the frequency of store visits, it appears that members are exhibiting more loyal shopping behaviour to the Co-op.

However, when the times per week visiting other stores is examined, members appear to be just as likely as non-members to frequent competing stores. 79.2% of members versus 76.9% of non-members are visiting other stores once a week or less. On the other hand, 20.9% of members versus 23.1% of non-members are visiting other stores two or more times a week. If loyalty is measured in terms of frequency of visiting a store, members are exhibiting slightly less loyal consumer behaviour to other stores. Chi-square tests were done on each set of crosstabulations, to determine if there was a strong relationship between membership and choosing to shop at the Co-op, or at other stores (Table 4.1). For a relationship between the variables to be statistically significant, significance values should be lower than 0.05. The higher significance values (0.077 and 0.941 respectively) for the crosstabulations in Table 4.1 indicate that there is not a statistically significant relationship between the times per week visiting the Co-op and other stores, and membership status. This tends to indicate that, in terms of shopping trip frequency, for both the Co-op and other stores, members and non-members are generally alike and no strong differences exist.

Another way to explore shopping loyalty to stores is not in terms of shopping behaviour (i.e. the number of stores a person frequents), but rather in terms of economic loyalty, or where a person tends to spend the majority of their grocery dollars. In some

cases, it may be that an individual shops only once a week or less at a particular store, but those purchases are for the majority of their groceries. Spending more at a particular store is also indicative of a more loyal relationship to a store (Wright, 1999; Rhee and Bell, 2002)

Respondents were asked at which store, noted in prior sections of the questionnaire, they purchased the majority of their groceries. This question was compared to the locational information provided earlier (in the case that the store was not a co-operative), and the responses are highlighted in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2: Stores where majority of groceries are purchased

	Member	Non-Member
Shawnessy Co-op	49.9% (191)	39.5% (15)
Other Co-op	6.0% (23)	5.3% (2)
Shawnessy Superstore	18.5% (71)	18.4% (7)
Other Superstore	2.6% (10)	0 (0)
Shawnessy Safeway	8.1% (31)	26.3% (10)
Other Safeway	5% (19)	2.6% (1)
Sobeys Bridlewood	2.6% (10)	2.6% (1)
Other Sobeys	2.3% (9)	2.6% (1)
Wal-Mart (Shawnessy)	0.8% (3)	0 (0)
Costco	2.3% (9)	0 (0)
Other Stores	1.8% (7)	2.6% (1)
Total	100% (383)	100% (38)

For 49.9% of members, the Shawnessy Co-op is the store where they spend the majority of their grocery dollars. When combined with the number of members who shop at another Co-op for most of their groceries, the percent increases to 55.9%. For non-members surprisingly the number who chose the Shawnessy Co-op as their store of choice was 39.5%, and over 44.8% chose co-ops in general. The number of stores patronized by members may appear to be more varied than those patronized by non-

members. For example, members have noted shopping at such places as Costco, Superstore, Sobeys and Wal-Mart among others, but on the other hand, non-members to choose primarily among three competing stores, Sobeys, Superstore and Safeway.

Because there were too many categories and not enough observations to do a chi-square on Table 4.2, the store types were aggregated into Co-op and other stores, and a chi-square was done on these categories (Table 4.3)

Table 4.3: Majority of grocery purchases by Co-op & other stores

	Members	Non-Members
Co-op Stores*	55.9% (214)	44.7% (17)
Other Stores	44.1% (169)	55.3% (21)
Total	100% (383)	100% (38)
Chi Square	X = 1.732 Significance 0.188	

* The category Co-op Stores includes those respondents that noted they purchase the majority of their groceries at a Co-op other than the Shawnessy Co-op

This table shows that there is no statistically significant relationship between membership and the choice of store, for spending the most money on groceries.

One interesting finding is in the difference in the place picked second most by members and non-members. For Co-op members it was the Real Canadian Superstore (at 18.5% frequenting the Shawnessy Superstore, and 21.1% when combined with other locations), however for non-members it was the Safeway (26.3% for the Shawnessy location, 28.9% when combined with other locations). When the percentages of members and non-members who shop at the Safeway are compared (13.1% members vs. 28.9% non-members), there is a large difference. One explanation for this may be the type of retail formatting and price. The Co-op and Safeway may be seen as similar in that their stores have more sophisticated layouts, and the focus is on quality products and

service. On the other hand, Superstore may be seen as having a focus on the bottom line price; layouts are warehouse-style with little embellishment, and there is little service (for instance customers have to bag their own groceries). Rhee and Bell (2002) have found that when shoppers do choose to change stores, it is to stores of the same format. Thus consumers are loyal not only to stores, but to particular formats. So, for these Co-op members the main reason for not spending the majority of their grocery dollars at the Co-op may be price related. For example, some of the other stores members noted they spend most of their groceries in include Wal-Mart and Costco, both known for their emphasis on no-frills and low price. For non-members store switching was to a store of a similar format.

Because store switching or cross-shopping is seen as a good indicator for low store loyalty (Popkowski-Leszczyc, 2000; 2001; Swinyard, 1997; Morganosky, 1997), it is important to examine it and determine if there is a difference in the levels of store switching for groceries between members and non-members. Respondents were asked to write down the other stores at which they purchase groceries, and from this counts of the number of other stores they mentioned were tallied. These are highlighted in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4: Number of stores patronized, by members and non-members

Number of other stores	Member	Non-Member
0	7.4% (29)	12.8% (5)
1 Store	43.4% (170)	56.4% (22)
2 Stores	36.7% (144)	20.5% (8)
3 Stores or more	12.5% (49)	10.3% (4)
Total	100% (392)	100% (39)

Because two cells in the matrix were less than 5 (25%), Chi-square tests could not be performed to test for a significant relationship between the two variables. Looking at the percentages in each column, non-members appear to be exhibiting slightly less store switching behaviour. Over 12% of non-members, compared to over 7% of members are shopping solely at the Co-op, as evidenced by not listing other stores. From there, more non-members than members are shopping at only one other store (56.4% vs. 43.4%), but more members than non-members are shopping at two other stores, and three and more stores. Based on this, members are not exhibiting strong shopping loyalty to their Co-op.

4.3 Household Location and Store Trip Distance

Respondents were asked to provide their postal codes and closest street intersections, to allow for the calculation of approximate distance of their residence from the Calgary Co-operative Association. The postal codes were geocoded using Geopoint Suite 4.5, which uses a postal geography file to assign latitudes and longitudes to each postal code. These coordinates were then entered into ArcView GIS, along with base maps of the city of Calgary and vicinity.

Another strategy had to be employed to plot the locations of grocery stores used by respondents to the survey. Because it was unreasonable for respondents to know the postal code of the grocery stores at which they shop, they were asked to provide the closest street intersection(s). Using this information, and verifying the location of the stores using store websites, and online telephone directories (which often provided maps), the locations were entered manually into GIS (Figure 4.1). This map image shows that generally the stores chosen appear to cluster towards the southern part of the

city of Calgary, most likely due to respondent households being primarily located in the southern section of the city. In addition, people are shopping in communities surrounding Calgary such as Okotoks and High River.

Figure 4.2 shows the locations of households, broken down by co-operative membership, in the south eastern section of the city of Calgary. There were some households outside the map boundaries, but for ease of viewing these were not included in the image. Using ArcView, point distances were calculated between the household locations and the Shawnessy Co-op, and over 76% of households were within five kilometres of the store; 94% of households were within 20 km of the store. This suggests that people will tend to shop within their immediate vicinity, an aspect of consumer behaviour that has been documented in other studies (Dawson, 1980, O'Neill, 1992; Timmermaans, 1980).

The household information was manipulated in ArcView to indicate which households were shopping primarily at the Shawnessy Co-op, and which households were shopping at other stores, for the majority of their grocery purchases. Looking at Figures 4.3 and 4.4 which show households by where they spend the majority of their groceries, there is no discernible pattern between where people are buying the majority of their groceries, and where their household is located. From this pattern, it is unsafe to conclude that members are traveling further distances than non-members to shop at the Co-op.

Figure 4.1: Location of stores where participants shop (members and non-members)

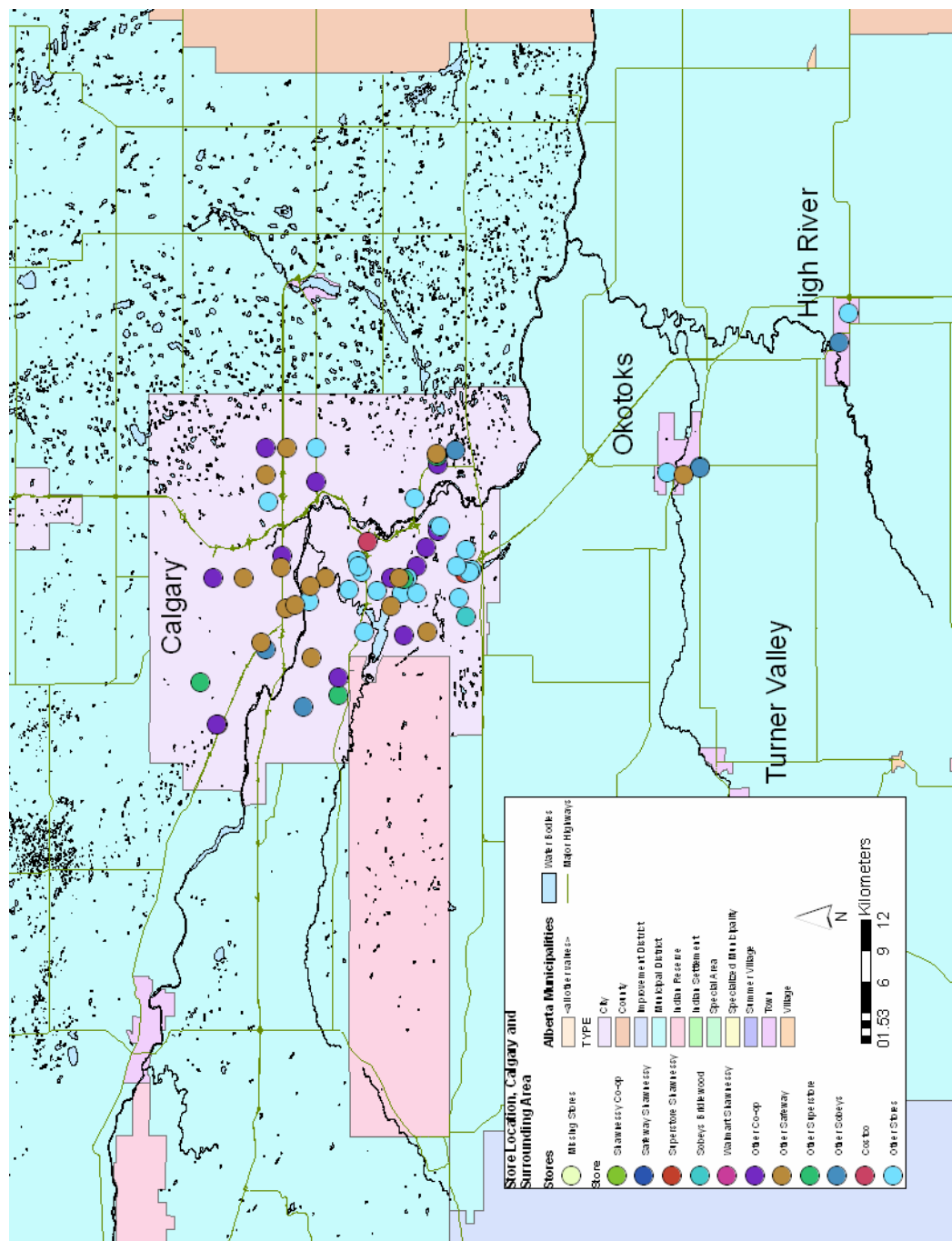
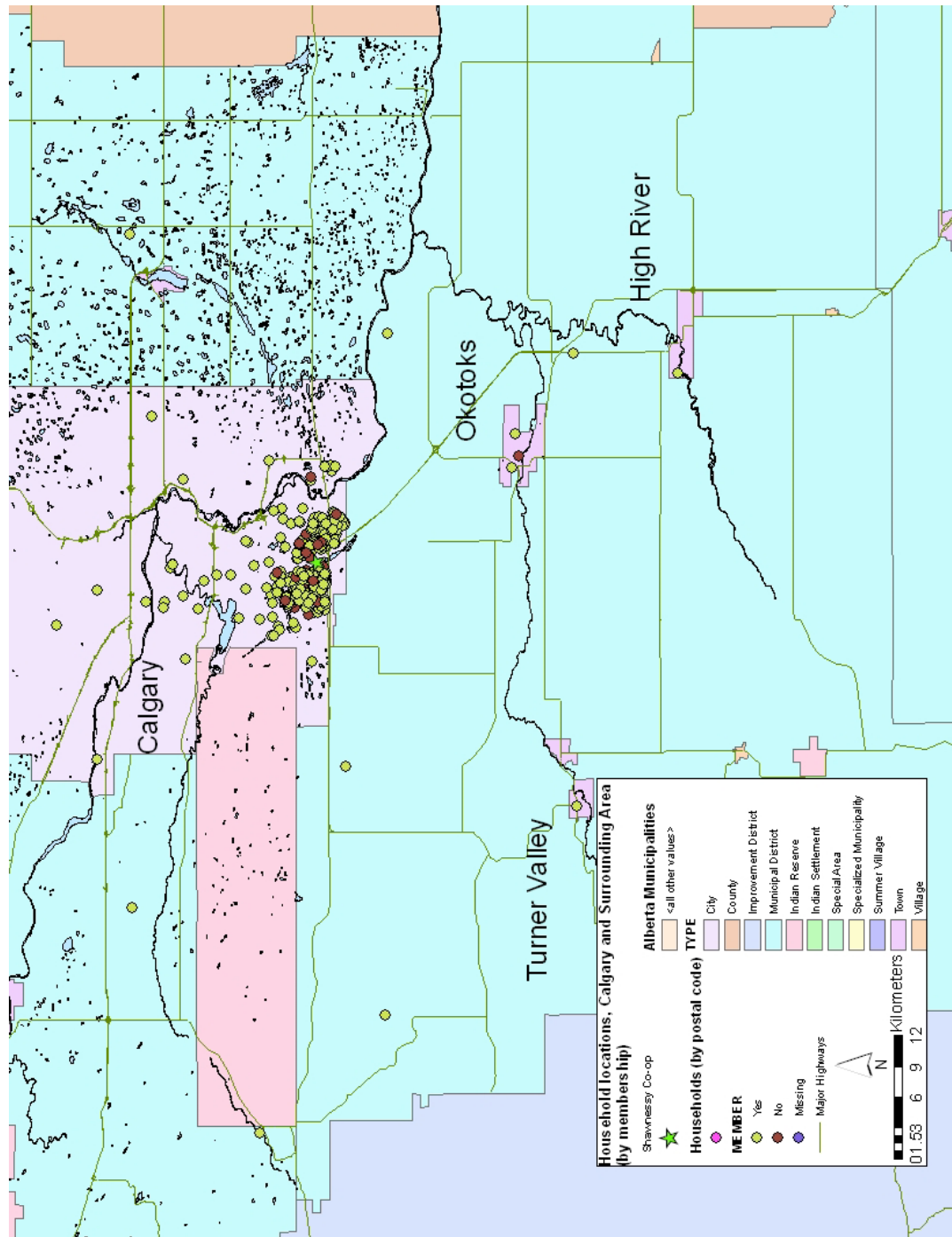


Figure 4.2: Household locations, Calgary and Surrounding Area (by Membership)



Looking at the households that lie beyond the city boundaries of Calgary, it can be seen that there are a subset of households where an individual is traveling into Calgary to shop at the Co-op for most of their groceries. These sites were selected out of the main dataset and examined more closely for any particular reasons why they were traveling further to shop at the Co-op.

Out of 22 outlying households that chose to shop at the Co-op for the majority of their groceries, about half of them were buying most of their groceries after work (at locations in Calgary), and they were choosing to shop at the Shawnessy Co-op. For the other 50 percent of these households, the reasons aren't as clear as to why they are traveling into Calgary, and shopping at the Co-op. From looking at the comments entered in the survey, the membership benefits and loyalty to the Co-op, seem to be bringing them back to the store. A long length of membership and satisfaction with being a member were mentioned by 7 of those 11 households, and it has been found in another study of consumer behaviour that the longer a store stays the main store, there less there is a chance of store turnover (Rhee and Bell, 2002). For the other four households, additional comments were made about the selection, quality and service at the store. These outlying households may have particular aspects regarding their strength of loyalty and membership commitment that will be more closely examined in the next chapter.

Figure 4.3: Household Locations Calgary and Surrounding

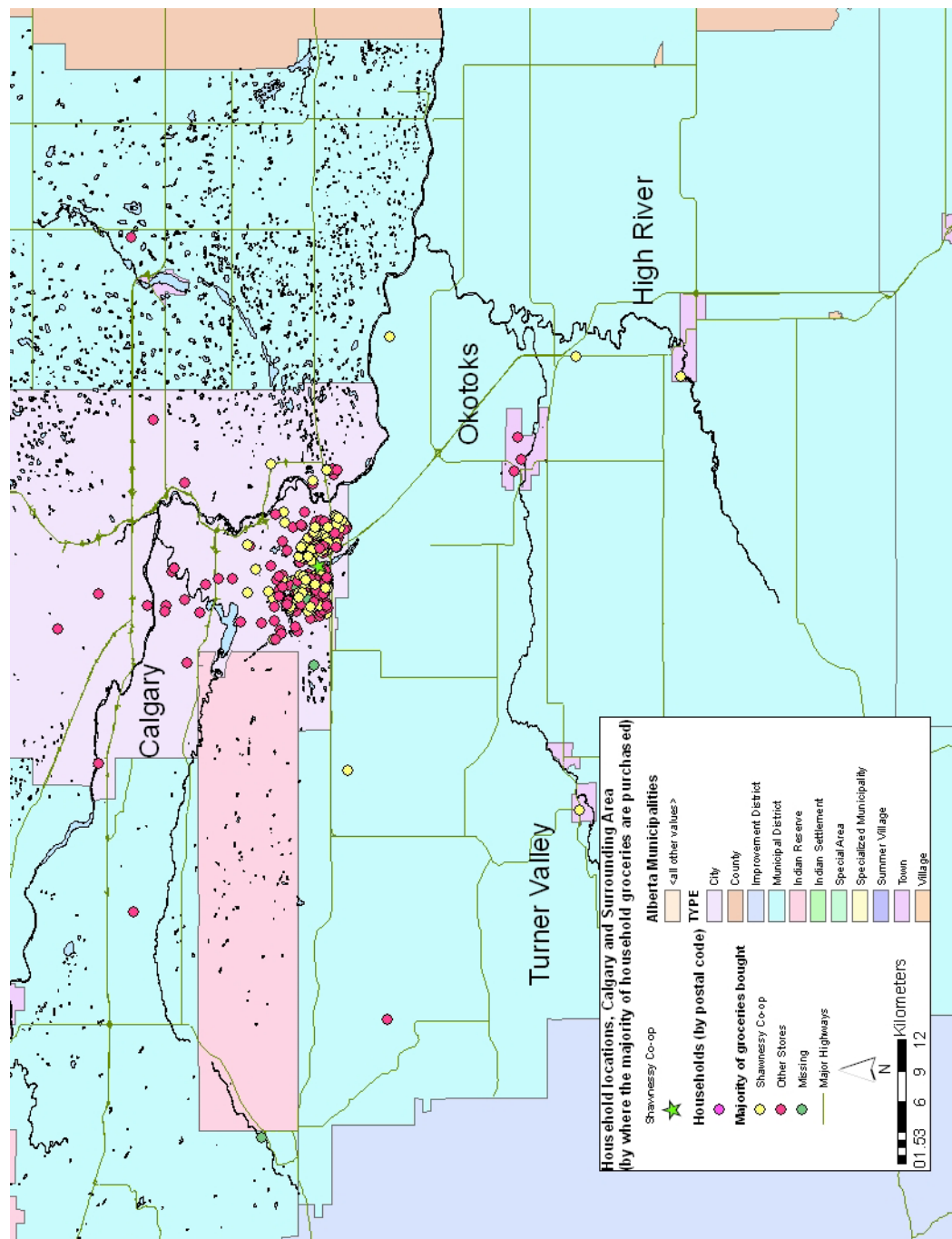
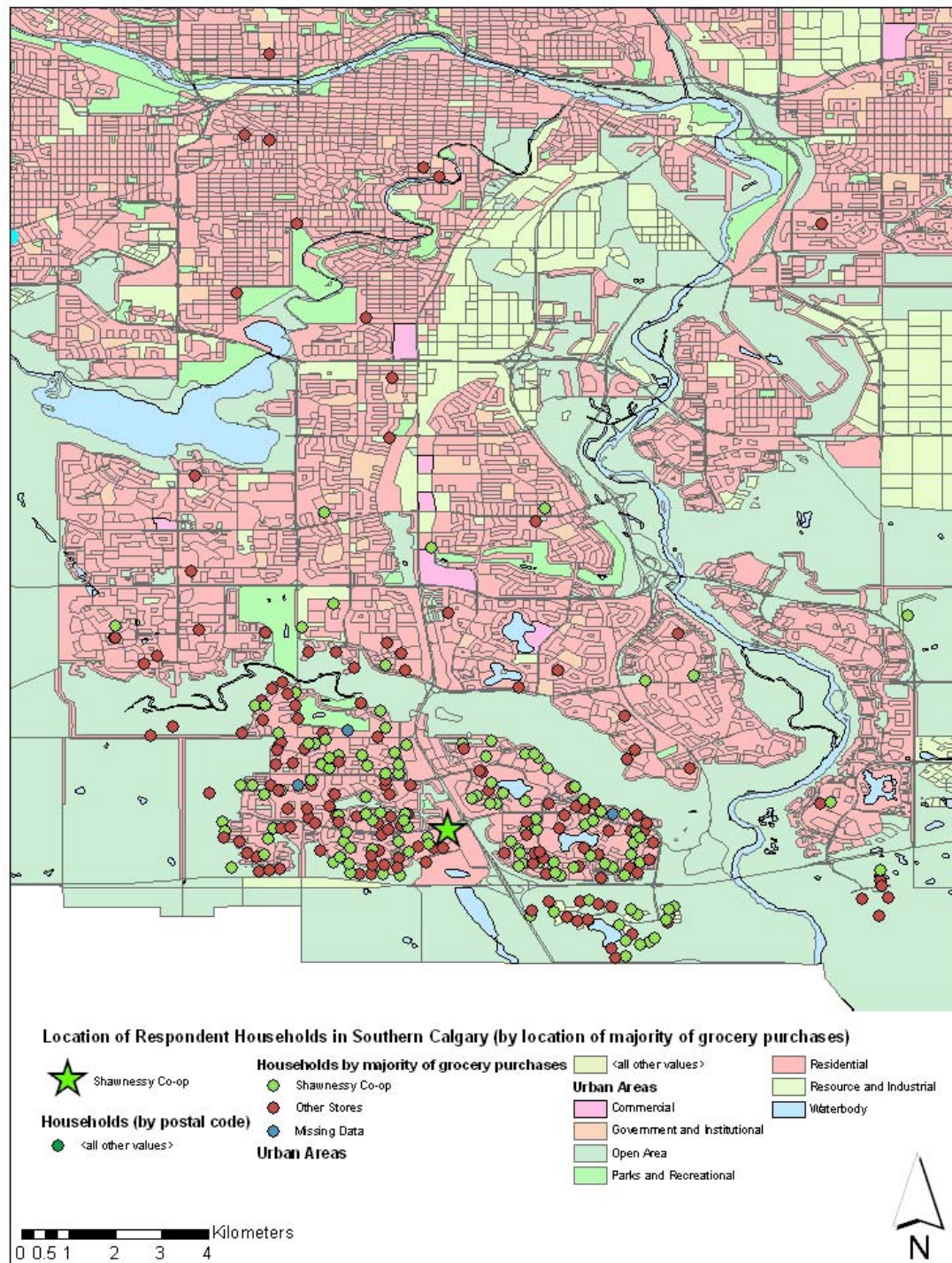


Figure 4.4: Location of Respondent Households in Southern Calgary, by Location of Majority of Grocery Purchases



Average distances from the Shawnessy Co-op and other descriptive statistics were calculated for both members and non members. These are shown in Table 4.5. A one-way ANOVA test was also done on the means of member and non-member distances to the Shawnessy Co-op location to test for a difference between the two groups. An F value of 0.090 indicates that there is not a significant difference between the members and non-members in this regard. There is also no significant difference when the sample is controlled by where they purchase the majority of their groceries, in this case the Shawnessy Co-op (F= .448, Significance 0.504) While this appears to go against the hypothesis that members will travel further distances to shop at the co-operative this result may be an indication of the success of the Co-op's regional strategy of siting stores within Calgary's neighbourhoods (Fairbairn, 2004). Members are not traveling further to purchase groceries because there is no need to.

Table 4.5: Member and Non-Member Household Average distances (KM) from the Shawnessy Co-op, and other descriptive statistics

		Member	Non-Member
N	Valid	379	38
	Missing	13	1
Mean		5.3205	5.7262
Median		2.4915	2.5670
Mode		15.76	15.76
Variance		62.810	67.817
Standard Deviation		7.92527	8.23510
Range		66.40	41.59
One-Way ANOVA	F= 0.090 Significance 0.764		

4.4 Store Choice Decision-Making: Price-Based or Other Motivations

At the end of the consumer behavior section respondents were asked to rate on a Likert scale of 1-10 (not likely-very likely), four separate statements related to their consumer behaviour. These include:

- a) I would travel past grocery stores closer to my home to shop at the Co-op
- b) I would travel past the Co-op closer to my home to shop at other stores
- c) I shop at the store which has the best prices
- d) I use store flyers to decide where to shop for my groceries

Table 4.6: Mean, median values on consumer behaviour ratings, member and non-member differences

Member of Co-op	I would travel past grocery stores closer to my home to shop at the Co-op	I would travel past the Co-op closer to my home to shop at other stores	I shop at the store that has the best prices	I use store flyers to decide where to shop for my groceries
YES N	390	388	386	387
Mean	6.83	3.80	6.97	4.68
Median	8	3	8	3
Mode	10	1	10	1
Standard Deviation	3.024	2.883	2.960	3.616
Variance	9.147	8.312	8.760	13.073
NO N	39	39	39	39
Mean	5.95	4.05	6.59	3.62
Median	6	2	6	2
Mode	1	1	10	1
Standard Deviation	3.276	3.162	2.962	3.369
Variance	10.734	9.997	8.775	11.348
Mann Whitney U-Test	6408.5	7240.5	6912.0	6144.0
Significance	0.100	0.652	0.391	0.050

The means and other descriptive statistics were calculated for each of the statements, and disaggregated based on membership. Comparing the mean values between members and non-members in terms of each statement, both groups tend to rate similarly on each of the statements, but some slight differences exist. For instance, members are scoring slightly higher than non-members on their likelihood of traveling further distances to shop at the Co-op; and for the statement looking at the likelihood of the opposite case, non-members are scoring slightly higher on their likelihood to travel past the Co-op to shop at other stores. Both members and non-members appear to score similarly on their likelihood to shop at the store with the best prices, and both appear to be equally ambivalent to the use of flyers for their shopping, rating on average 4.7 for members, 3.6 for non-members.

What these ratings tend to suggest is that, while some slight differences between members and non-members exist, there are no outstanding differences between members and non-members in their personal shopping strategies. There is a higher tendency for both members and non-members to rate prices as a motivator for their consumer behaviour. Mann-Whitney U-tests underscore this, as the differences between members and non-members are not statistically significant, the exception being using store flyers to shop for groceries; the significance being 0.05. It is unclear why this would be a significant difference. Store flyers are often used to search for bargains across different stores; however when asked about shopping based on price, members and non-members were not significantly different.

4.5 Conclusions

Due to the lack of empirical research on co-operatives and their members, it is difficult to make conclusions about the behaviour of members of the Calgary Co-op. Overall impressions of the data however suggest that, members and non-members are fairly similar in shopping patterns. Members appear to be exhibiting the same tendencies when it comes to multiple store shopping, in fact exhibiting slightly more cross-shopping behaviour, and this has been indicative of low store loyalty in other studies (Rhee and Bell, 2002; Popkowski-Leszczyzyc, 2000; 2001). Many members are going to other stores to buy the majority of their groceries. In addition, many are noting that they shop at many different stores overall, indicating a high level of shopping mobility. What was interesting to see in the selection of stores, however, was that members, when not shopping at the Co-op, more frequently chose a store of another retailing format type (Superstore), whereas non-members often chose a store format which is considered to be parallel to that of the Co-op (Safeway). This may suggest that, when shopping at stores other than the Co-op, price is the main motivator as Superstore is seen as a retailing format that emphasizes low prices, rather than service, layout and quality, like stores such as Safeway and the Co-op.

In terms of store loyalty to the Co-op, members are shopping more often and spending more money at the Co-op than non-members. However, these differences are not strong. When tested for significance, there is no relationship between membership and economic loyalty to the Co-op.

In terms of spatial shopping behaviour, member households are not significantly different from non-members in the distance traveled to shop. Overall, members and non-members behave similarly in that they choose to shop at stores within the immediate

vicinity, which is not unlike consumers in general in other studies. Where members are traveling from rural areas to shop at the Co-op, for half of these households they are shopping for groceries while traveling to and from their workplace in the city.

What motivates members and non-members to shop at specific grocery stores is not dissimilar either. Members only slightly rated a higher likelihood of driving past other grocery stores closer to their home to shop at the Co-op; for non-members the same case held true, in terms of driving past the Co-op to shop at other stores. Both members and non-members rated an equally low likelihood of using flyers to shop for groceries, and both indicated a slightly higher likelihood to shop based on price.

Rethinking the hypotheses presented at the beginning of the chapter, that *consumer co-operative members will be on average more likely to frequent the co-operative than non-members* and that *co-operative members will be more willing to travel further distances to shop at the co-operative*, it appears as though overall, members are not more likely to frequent the co-operative or travel longer distances to shop there. There is however, a small group of members that are exhibiting patterns of loyalty to the Co-op. In the next chapter, the attitudes of members and non-members will be examined, and perhaps most importantly the member participation and identification with the Co-op. Connections will made back to the elements of consumer behaviour examined here.

CHAPTER FIVE: EXAMINING CO-OPERATIVE IDENTITY, MEMBER PARTICIPATION AND SHOPPING ATTITUDES

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the final two hypotheses used to test the overall research will be examined. The first, that *members have different attitudes to shopping at the co-operative*, will seek to differentiate members and non-members, one of the first steps to determining if membership in a co-operative leads to differing consumer behaviour. The second hypothesis examined in this chapter, *members with a strong membership identity will choose to shop at the co-operative over other retailing forms*, will examine member perceptions of membership in the Co-op, and how this relates to their overall shopping behaviour.

The chapter will begin with a discussion of the shopping preferences of members and non-members of the co-operative, comparing the importance of specific attributes in a shopping environment in general, and then examining the quality of these attributes at the Calgary Co-op. Open-ended responses to important attributes in choosing a grocery store, and reasons for choosing to shop at the Co-op are also examined here. The quality of the shopping environment is also an important determinant of shopping behaviour, and understanding how members and non-members rate this is important to collect.

The rest of the chapter focuses primarily on the participation of Co-op members in the membership activities of their co-operative, including attendance at annual meetings, reading newsletters/newspapers, participating as a board member, and so on. In addition, any open-ended responses to member participation will be examined. Bhattacharya, Rao and Glynn (1995) noted that how a person identifies with an organization could be seen in their willingness to participate in the activities of the organization.

The following two sections look at deeper linkages between the co-operative and its members. The motivations for members to join the co-operative are examined, as well as any membership-related comments that arose in the first section. The last section will look at the identity-related statements members were asked to rate, and these will be linked to their shopping behaviour.

5.2 Shopping Preferences

Members and non-members were asked to rate a series of statements related to important attributes in choosing a grocery store. This activity was intended to warm participants up to thinking about their shopping experiences, before asking them to rate their shopping experience at the Co-op, which was measured using similar ratings. Each rating was measured on a 10 point Likert scale, based on the strength of their preference for that particular shopping/store attribute.

Figure 5.1 highlights member and non-member responses to each of the statements about important attributes in choosing a grocery store. Looking at the mean ratings of member and non-member responses, there is very little difference between members and non-members in their shopping preferences. Mann-Whitney U-tests

indicate that the differences are not statistically significant. Both members and non-members tended to rate having other services available, the availability of childcare, the opportunity to socialize with other customers and friends, and the availability of a customer club/air miles programme, very low, averaging around a rating of 2-4 for each statement. Higher-rated statements from both members and non-members include good quality groceries, low prices, a wide product range for groceries, friendly and helpful staff, that the staff are well treated by the company, a convenient store location, the availability of parking, a convenient layout, attractive store design, and a clean store. Members and non-members average ratings for providing support to the community, the availability of generic brands, informative store flyers, getting shopping done quickly and local ownership was between 5 and 6.9, suggesting that they were neither strongly for or against these shopping attributes.

Table 5.1: Important attributes in choosing a grocery store, average rating by members and non-members

Member	Good quality groceries	Cleanliness of store	Friendly and helpful staff	Availability of parking	Wide product range for groceries
YES N Mean	388 9.43	388 9.4	386 9.16	386 8.91	387 8.96
NO N Mean	38 9.42	38 9.32	38 8.84	38 8.95	38 8.68
Mann Whitney U Significance	6971.5 0.490	7039.0 0.586	6439.0 0.155	7324.0 0.988	6427.5 0.166
Member	Convenient store location	Convenience of layout	Low prices	Staff are treated well by the company	I can get my shopping done quickly
YES N Mean	386 8.84	387 8.71	387 8.45	380 8.52	387 6.81
NO N Mean	38 8.71	38 8.5	38 8.42	37 8.03	38 8.82
Mann Whitney U Significance	6755.5 0.407	6927.0 0.529	7313.0 0.953	6317.0 0.280	6773.5 0.404
Member	Attractiveness of store design	The store is locally owned	Provides support to the community	Informative store flyers in newspapers	Availability of generic brands
YES N Mean	387 7.51	386 6.81	385 6.38	388 6.28	386 5.7
NO N Mean	38 7.39	38 6.97	37 6.7	38 5.63	38 5.34
Mann Whitney U Significance	6961.0 0.581	5543.5 0.901	6713.5 0.560	6231.0 0.112	6893.5 0.538
Member	Availability of a customer club/air miles program	Other services available	Opportunity to socialize with other customers and friends	Availability of child care services	
YES N Mean	384 4.6	386 3.49	386 2.7	379 2.09	
NO N Mean	38 5.26	38 3.68	38 2.13	38 2.5	
Mann	6466.5	6986.5	6452.5	6793.5	

Whitney U Significance	0.239	0.610	0.174	0.426	
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Members and non-members were then asked to rate statements related to what motivates them to shop at the Calgary Co-op. These statements were similar in format and style with the exception of a few special statements around aspects of Co-op membership. Mean ratings and other descriptive statistics for these statements are provided in Figure 5.2.

Again, there were not large divergences between members and non-members with respect to their statement ratings. Again, the availability of childcare services, other services available, and the opportunity to socialize with other customers and friends were not important reasons to shop at the Co-op for members and non-members, with the average rating between 2 and 3.5 for those three statements. Higher-rated statements (7 or higher) include member ownership/benefits for patronage, providing support to the community, good quality groceries, low prices, a wide product range for groceries, friendly and helpful staff, staff being well treated by the Co-op, convenient store location, availability of parking, convenient layout, attractive store design, store cleanliness, getting shopping done quickly, and local ownership. Statements in the middle ground (6-7), included belief in Co-op values and philosophy, the availability of Co-op brands, and informative store flyers in news papers. The difference between members and non-members with respect to these statements was not statistically significant, with the exception of friendly and helpful staff. Here the statistical significance was 0.001, with members' ratings being generally higher than non-members. The reasons for this are unclear. Perhaps they are due to more loyal members developing closer relationships with the staff than non-members.

Table 5.2: Average ratings from members and non-members for important reasons to shop at the Co-op

Member	Cleanliness of store	Good quality groceries	Convenient store location	Wide product range for groceries	Availability of parking
YES N Mean	349 9.28	350 9.16	349 8.78	349 8.64	349 8.6
NO N Mean	32 8.97	32 9.03	32 8.72	32 8.47	32 8.34
Mann Whitney U Significance	4955.5 0.228	5041.5 0.304	5114.0 0.403	4929.0 0.249	4913.0 0.234
Member	Friendly and helpful staff	I can get my shopping done quickly	Convenience of layout	Staff are treated well by the Co-op	Attractiveness of store design
YES N Mean	349 8.83	349 8.18	350 8.3	338 8.16	350 7.72
NO N Mean	32 8	32 8.41	33 8.15	32 7.66	32 7.22
Mann Whitney U Significance	3771.5 0.001	5354.5 0.691	5162.5 0.296	4656.5 0.179	4625.5 0.096
Member	Low prices	The Co-op is locally owned	Member ownership, benefits for patronage	Provides support to the community	I believe in the Co-op's values and philosophy
YES N Mean	350 7.41	347 7.5	349 7.74	347 7.23	349 6.96
NO N Mean	32 7.13	32 6.97	32 6.66	32 7.03	31 6.32
Mann Whitney U Significance	5065.0 0.362	4906.5 0.264	4494.5 0.062	5128.5 0.469	4636.5 0.182
Member	Informative store flyers in newspapers	Availability of Co-op brands	Other services available	Opportunity to socialize with other customers, friends	Availability of child care services
YES N Mean	344 6.13	350 6	350 3.34	348 2.69	350 3.34
NO N Mean	32 5.47	32 5.41	33 3.91	32 2.22	33 3.91

Mann	4647.0	4850.0	5328.5	5250.0	5543.5
Whitney U					
Significance	0.140	0.206	0.437	0.550	0.901

Both sets of statements indicate that whether it be the Co-op or another competing store, members and non-members are not dissimilar in what they look for in a shopping store. Like other studies of consumer behaviour (Oppewal, Timmermans and Louviere, 1997; Seiders and Tigert, 2000; Sommer, Hohn and Tyburczy, 1981), store attributes such as quality products and groceries, a clean shopping environment, convenience, and price are important to both members and non-members. In addition, the important attributes for choosing a grocery store and the important attributes for shopping at the Co-op are similar. When looking at the higher-rated statements between the ideal store environment and the Co-op, the order of importance for attributes in each set of statements (stores in general and the Co-op) generally match between the two.

5.3 Shopping and Membership Motivations

Members and non-members were given space within the survey to provide open ended responses about shopping at the Co-op and other stores in general, important attributes in choosing a grocery store, and reasons behind shopping at the Co-op. These responses were analysed for any emerging themes or trends in the comments. This section is organized according to each question in the survey.

5.3.1 Do you have any other comments on shopping at the Co-op or any other grocery stores?

At the end of the shopping behaviour section, respondents were given the option of adding any comments they may have about shopping at the Co-op or shopping at

other stores. These were first grouped based on membership and non-membership, then grouped based on common themes. Emerging themes related to shopping behaviour and motivations were discussed below.

Ten non-members wrote comments related to shopping at the Co-op and at other stores. The majority of these respondents commented on the superior product quality and service at the Co-op. These respondents commented on the quality of meat products and produce including the display of produce items. In addition, service related comments included the convenience of not having to pay for a cart to bag your own groceries, and the exceptional carry-out service.

More negatively-worded comments from non-members regarded the price of goods. One respondent commented on the convenience of the Co-op, calling it 'handy', but that it was expensive. Other respondents commented that the price was often a deterrent to more loyal patronage, saying such things as 'prices are getting higher and higher and it is making it harder to be a more loyal shopper'.

One hundred and ninety eight members wrote comments about shopping at the Co-op and other stores. Members' opinions about shopping at the Co-op and other stores followed similar themes as non-members but because there were more comments to analyze, there was much wider variety. In terms of what motivated members to shop at the Co-op, like non-members, the quality of products such as meat and produce, and the quality of service was mentioned often. Over 90 members commented on how the staff was helpful and friendly, and how the products were superior at the Co-op than at other stores.

Location and convenience were mentioned by some members to be a benefit to shopping at the Co-op and a deterrent for others. For some it is located close to their

household, and the benefits of the membership were an added bonus. One member commented, ‘prior to joining the Co-op I shopped at Save on Foods. They closed their small store in Midnapore- 5 minute drive. So I switched to Co-op. Ten minute drive. The benefits of gas costs, etc seemed more than at Safeway, which was the same distance.’

For some, the lack of a Co-op near their home was a deterrent to more loyal shopping at the Co-op. One member noted that there was ‘no Co-op within 30 minutes, otherwise I would use it.’ Yet another mentioned, ‘I would shop at the Co-op more frequently if there was one in the Foothills. Distance is a deterrent to shopping Co-op.’ The overall trend appears to be one where distance and location deter more loyal membership to the co-operative.

One theme that was mentioned quite often by members was the price of products at the Co-op being much more expensive than the competition. Over 55 respondents mentioned that the prices were too high at the Co-op, for items that were cheaper at other stores. It was commonly mentioned as a deterrent to shopping solely at the Co-op. For instance, one member noted, ‘although I am a Co-op member I have largely stopped doing all my shopping at Co-op because produce is more expensive and not necessarily of the better quality and overall pricing is not as favorable as the competition.’ Another member commented, ‘I wish Co-op could lower their prices more. I tend to do larger grocery purchases at Superstore- better prices by about \$40-60 dollars, but limited product.’

Price was also a motivation for multi-store shopping, for instance, shopping at certain stores for certain items. It was often the case that respondents would purchase produce and meat at the Co-op, and travel to other stores for bulk and other dry goods items. The response of one member sums this up succinctly, ‘I shop at Safeway because

my prescriptions are there. I shop at Wal-Mart because the dry goods and cleaning products are cheaper. I shop at Co-op for produce.’

There were also comments which spoke of strong loyalty to the Co-op, and their membership. For example, one member mentioned ‘Co-op gives me a sense of belonging!’ Another noted ‘we have belonged to Co-op for most of our lives. We have appreciated the rebates and other services the Co-ops have provided.’ Yet another noted, ‘I am always happier with my shopping when I choose Co-op, the stores are so inviting and well organized.’ However, these comments did not necessarily spell out into more loyal behaviour in terms of shopping at the Co-op. The participant who made the first comment spent the majority of her grocery dollars at the Co-op. The other two participants who made those comments did not.

5.3.2 Can you please describe in your own words what are important attributes in choosing a grocery store?

As a precursor to the close-ended statements about important attributes in choosing a grocery store, participants were asked to state in their own words what they looked for when making a store selection. Four hundred thirteen (96%) participants in total provided comments, 377(96%) members and 36 (92%) non-members.

Comments on shopping attributes fell into eight main categories, totals are provided in the figure below in order from highest to lowest mention. Member and non-member comments were separated, but as can be seen from the table, there is no difference between members and non-members in terms of what they prefer. The most often-mentioned attribute was good product quality, and a wide selection of groceries. Comments such as ‘good produce and meats,’ ‘freshness and appearance of fruit and

produce’ and ‘good selection, quality products’ were often stated. Good service (friendly staff, help carrying out groceries) and price were also very important to participants.

The appearance of a store, including how clean it is, its layout, and familiarity with where products are, was also a very important attribute in choosing a grocery store. Not as frequently mentioned by participants included the location of the store, the convenience of getting to the store, or the availability of parking.

Table 5.3: Important attributes in choosing a grocery store, member and non-member comments

Comment	Member % (N)	Non-Member% (N)	Total % (N)
Product Quality/Selection	65.5% (247)	58.3% (21)	64.9% (268)
Service	50.1% (189)	44.4% (16)	49.6% (205)
Price	47.7% (180)	33.3% (12)	46.5% (192)
Appearance (Cleanliness/layout)	43.2% (163)	27.7% (10)	41.9% (173)
Location	9.2% (35)	25% (9)	10.7% (44)
Convenience	9.0% (34)	11.1% (4)	9.2% (38)
Parking	2.4% (9)	2.8% (1)	2.4% (10)
Other Services	1.9% (7)	0	1.7% (7)
Total participants reporting	377	36	413

5.3.3 Can you please describe in your own words why you choose to shop at the Co-op?

When asked to make comments on why they chose to shop at the Co-op, there was a wider divergence of statements from both members and non-members. Four hundred one participants left comments; 366 members had comments, as did 35 non-members. They are listed below.

Most of the comments participants had about choosing to shop at the Co-op paralleled comments about important attributes in choosing a grocery store. Most often mentioned by members and non-members was the product quality and selection at the Co-op. Many of the participants shop at the Co-op because certain products are of good quality at their stores, and can't be matched at other stores. For instance, the quality of meat and produce at the Co-op was frequently mentioned at the Co-op, and, in addition, the quality of specialty products like the bakery bread and sushi products. Other attributes of the Co-op that emerged, included service (friendly and helpful staff, assistance with carry out), the appearance and layout of the store, location and convenience, and price.

Unlike the previous section on grocery store attributes, there were some comments that spoke to membership-related reasons for choosing to shop at the Co-op. For about 22% of members who responded, the member benefits were an important reason for shopping at the Co-op. Member benefits included any comments related to getting the rebate cheque at the end of the year. In addition, it included comments related to getting gas discounts with membership, or items on sale, things that would not be available to people without a membership. For example, one member writes 'the cheque once a year is nice. When gassing up, receiving the \$ voucher to use in the store is great.'

Others spoke about member loyalty, and to member ownership/control for choosing to shop at the Co-op. For about 9.8% of members, they chose to shop at the Co-op because they have been shopping there for many years, and continue to do so. One member noted 'we have been members for close to 40 years wherever we lived.' Another writes 'Co-op served my needs- loyal to co-op for 18+ years.'

A smaller handful of members spoke about member ownership and control when they noted their reasons for shopping at the Co-op. For example, one member wrote, 'I feel the co-op is my store. I've shopped since 1976. Membership rewards are special.' Another wrote, 'Member discounts and rebate, a Canadian store, the members have a say, helpful carryout and staff.'

Another interesting set of comments made by participants for choosing the Co-op related to family or friendship connections to the Co-op. For a small number of members, about 4%, it was a family tradition of shopping at the Co-op that propelled them to shop there as well. To highlight this, one member wrote that her dad always preferred the Co-op, yet another writes, 'brought up in Saskatchewan in a Co-op family- Father managed a bulk fuel and oil co-op- it's in the blood.' In addition, about 3% of members shopped at the Co-op because they themselves, a family member (husband, son) or a friend was an employee of the Co-op. Employees are automatically required to be members of the Co-op association.

Table 5.4: Member and non-member comments, reasons for shopping at the Co-op

Comment	Member	Non-member	Total
Product selection/quality	47.5% (174)	54.3% (19)	48.1% (193)
Service	33.6% (123)	31.4% (11)	33.4% (134)
Member benefits	21.6% (79)	0	19.7% (79)
Appearance (cleanliness/layout)	19.4% (71)	11.4% (4)	18.7% (75)
Location	13.4% (49)	14.2% (5)	13.5% (54)
Convenience	12.0% (44)	17.1% (6)	12.5% (50)
Price	10.9% (40)	8.6% (3)	10.7% (43)
Member loyalty	9.8% (36)	0	9.0% (36)
Local ownership	9.0% (33)	2.9% (1)	8.5% (34)
Other services	6.0% (22)	2.9% (1)	5.7% (23)
Member ownership	5.2% (19)	0	4.7% (19)
Family tradition (parents were members, etc.)	3.8% (14)	0	3.5% (14)
Family member/self an employee	2.4% (9)	0	2.2% (9)
Community support/involvement	2.2% (8)	0	2.0% (8)
Member of another Co-op	0.55% (2)	0	0.5% (2)
Sales	0.55% (2)	0	0.5% (2)
Satisfied with store	0	5.7% (2)	0.5% (2)
Socialize with friends	0.27% (1)	0	0.25% (1)
Total participants reporting	366	35	401

5.4 Membership Participation

Members were asked to rate their likelihood of participating in a series of different activities sponsored by the Calgary Co-op. These included more direct means of participating in the Co-op, including attendance at Co-op annual meetings, participating in social activities at the Co-op, being a board member or volunteer for the Co-op and attending educational events at the Co-op. More indirect forms of

participating in the Co-op included reading Co-op newsletters and annual reports, providing store and other feedback to the Co-op, and talking to other members about the Co-op.

According to the average ratings given by members for participating in the Co-op, there is a very low level of involvement by members of the Co-op, outside of shopping for groceries at its stores. The highest rated activity was speaking to other members about the Co-op, followed by reading Co-op newsletters. From there the average rating dropped significantly, with the lowest rated activity being participation in the Co-op as a board member or volunteer.

While overall there was a low likelihood of involvement amongst members in general, when members were grouped according to whether or not they reported spending the majority of their grocery dollars in the Co-op or in other stores, some differences were apparent. Mann-Whitney U-tests indicated that members who shopped at other stores had a statistically significant lower involvement in participation at the Co-op.

Table 5.5: Average ratings of member participation in Co-op activities

Member	Talk to other members I know about the Co-op	Read Co-op newsletters	Read annual reports	Participate in social activities at the Co-op
Co-op Stores N	198	199	197	198
Mean	2.89	5.80	4.23	3.39
Other Stores N	166	165	164	166
Mean	2.05	4.70	2.93	2.35
Mann Whitney U	13261.0	13478.5	12222.5	13285.5
Significance	0.001	0.003	0.000	0.000
Member	Provide store and other feedback to the Co-op	Attend educational events at the Co-op	Attend Co-op meetings	Participated in the Co-op as a board member or volunteer
Co-op Stores N	197	198	198	198
Mean	3.08	1.68	1.49	1.22
Other Stores N	165	165	164	164
Mean	2.07	1.25	1.21	1.03
Mann Whitney U	12501.0	14624.0	14986.0	15215.5
Significance	0.000	0.004	0.012	0.008

Members were also given the opportunity to write down any other means of involvement in the Co-op not covered by the rating statements. Only a handful of members (36) chose to write down activities. Other activities mentioned by members as having participated in included the annual breakfast at the Calgary Stampede sponsored by the Calgary Co-op, the flu vaccine clinics where one can get an immunization, seniors' day at Heritage Park, Kids' Club events, food bank drives, the paperback exchange, and health information sessions related to different issues. These findings are not surprising. Many academics have spoken of low participation in the associational aspects of co-operatives; in addition, low annual meeting attendance is not uncommon in

larger co-operatives (International Joint Project on Co-operative Democracy, 1995, Spear, 2000, Wijkstrom, 1997). In the marketing literature, it has been found that as groups increased in size, participation in groups decreased (Stoel, 2002).

5.5 The Influence of Co-operative Identity

Members were asked to describe in their own words their reasons for becoming members of the Co-op. Of 392 members, 313 (79.8%) added comments on why they chose membership. These were analyzed and the categories that emerged are in the figure below.

Many of the comments posted for becoming a member echo those responses for an ideal grocery store, and choosing to shop at the Co-op. These included the convenience and location of the store, product quality, layout and design of stores. In addition, extra services such as childcare, and service quality were also mentioned, albeit in lower frequencies.

The most often reported reason for getting a membership was in order to get the benefits of being a member. Close to half of respondents (49%) noted this. This category included getting the annual dividend for shopping at the Co-op, getting discounts on gas at the pump, and getting lower prices with membership on sale items. At the Calgary Co-op, a customer can only get sale prices on products if they have a membership- it is very akin to Safeway Club benefits. One member went so far as to say that ‘if you don’t sign up, it costs too much to shop there. Member costs nothing so you get free discounts.’¹

¹ Membership in the Calgary Co-operative actually costs \$1.00.

In addition to member benefits which also arose in the reasons for choosing to shop at the Co-op, other comments related to aspects of the Co-op not directly to grocery shopping emerged. For example, it was again mentioned that for about 13% of members, a family tradition was spurring membership. In addition, the participant or a family member being an employee, local ownership, member ownership and control were also mentioned.

It is interesting to note that for a few members, it was membership in another Co-op, past or present that spurred their membership in the Calgary Co-op. One member noted that he 'came from Saskatchewan where the co-op was the best store.' Another member wrote, 'I believe in the Canadian-owned member participation. Was also a member in Saskatchewan until June 2002 (moved).'

In addition, about 5%, or 15 members wrote that they became members because they believed in the idea of the Co-op, its philosophy and values, or simply that it was the 'right thing to do.' For example, one member wrote, 'there were a number of grocery stores in the area from which to choose and after trying all of them, I chose to focus on the Calgary Co-op and become a member because of its philosophy/vision, values and how they are lived out in terms of H.R. (Human Resources), quality of product, etc.' Another wrote that he liked 'the co-op idea and the store itself.'

Table 5.6: Reasons for becoming members of the Calgary Co-op, member responses

Comment	Percent of member mentions (N)
Member benefits (discounts, dividend, lower prices with card, etc.)	49.2% (154)
Family tradition/recommendation	12.5% (39)
Convenience/location	12.1% (38)
Quality products	8.6% (27)
Local ownership	8.3% (26)
Co-op idea, philosophy, values	4.8% (15)
Family/self an employee	3.5% (11)
Member of another Co-op	2.9% (9)
Member ownership/control	2.6% (8)
Layout/design of stores	1.6% (5)
Supports the community	1.3% (4)
Service/staff	0.64% (2)
Extra services/amenities available	0.64% (2)
Total members reporting	313

In an attempt to measure the strength of their identity as a member, members of the Co-op were asked to rate 6 statements related to their membership, namely that they would recommend becoming a member of the Co-op to others, that they would recommend shopping at the Co-op to others, that being a member was important to the way they think of themselves as a person, that they feel other members have the same values and interests as they do, that the Co-op is like a community, and that the Co-op is part of a community. As a scale, these statements have a strong internal consistency, with a Cronbach alpha coefficient of 0.876.

With the exception of recommending membership and recommending shopping to others, the identity statements were all rated moderately important by members of the Co-op. The lowest-rated statements include whether membership was important to the way participants thought of themselves as a person (speaking to personal identity), and

whether or not the individual felt that members have the same values and interests as they did (group identity).

Table 5.7: Average ratings of member identity statements and comparisons of members' shopping loyalty

Member	I would recommend becoming a member of the Co-op to others	I would recommend shopping at the Co-op to others	Being a member is important to the way I think of myself as a person
Co-op N Mean	195 8.16	195 8.56	196 4.16
Other Stores N Mean	166 7.07	167 7.09	166 2.86
Member	I feel that other members have the same values and interests as I do	I feel the Co-op is like a community	The Co-op is part of my community
Co-op N Mean	194 4.76	196 5.79	196 7.19
Other Stores N Mean	162 3.52	163 4.04	164 5.34

The findings are interesting in that the ratings on some of the identity statements complement existing literature on identity and behaviour. It has been found in other consumer studies that a willingness to recommend membership has been linked to increased member loyalty (Bhattacharya Rao and Glynn, 1995), as well recommendations of shopping has been linked with higher levels of shopping loyalty (Sirohi, 1998; Sivadas and Baker-Prewitt, 2000)

Because the identity statements had a high reliability rating as a scale, member values for each statement were averaged across to provide an overall value for each member, with respect to their identification. Members were grouped into three categories based on their value: low identifiers (1-4.9), moderate identifiers (5-6.9), and

high identifiers (7-10). The identification categories were then crosstabulated with the primary store for grocery shopping (Co-op or other stores), and a Chi-square test was done to determine statistical significance between the different identity groups (Table 5.7).

Table 5.8: Identification and shopping behaviour comparison

Store Loyalty	Low Identifier	Moderate Identifier	High Identifier
Co-op	29.2% (26)	56.7% (89)	71.3% (77)
Other Stores	70.8% (63)	43.3% (68)	28.7% (31)
Total	100% (89)	100% (157)	100% (108)
Chi Square	X= 35.496 Significance=0.000		

The high Chi Square value (35.496) and the high significance value (0.000) indicate that there is a significant relationship between identification and shopping behaviour. Examining the data, there was a tendency for members who more highly rated each identity statement, to shop at the Co-op.

5.5.1 Revisiting Membership Identification comments

It is worthwhile to delve into whether or not member comments differed based on their identification with the co-operative. The same identity groupings used in the above comparison (low, moderate, high) were added to members' open ended comments on why they became members, and examined to see if any strong differences emerged. Table 5.8 shows the reasons for membership, disaggregated by the level of identification in the Co-op.

Table 5.9: Reasons for membership comments, disaggregated by level of identification

Comment	Low Identifier	Moderate Identifier	High Identifier
Member benefits (discounts, dividend, lower prices with card, etc.)	58% (42)	51% (79)	29% (33)
Family tradition/recommendation	8% (6)	10% (16)	15% (17)
Convenience/location	14% (10)	12% (18)	9% (10)
Quality products	8% (6)	9% (14)	6% (7)
Local ownership	0% (0)	5% (8)	16% (18)
Co-op idea, philosophy, values	6% (4)	2% (3)	7% (8)
Family/self an employee	3% (2)	3% (5)	4% (4)
Member of another Co-op	0% (0)	4% (6)	3% (3)
Member ownership/control	1% (1)	0% (0)	6% (7)
Layout/design of stores	1% (1)	1% (2)	2% (2)
Supports the community	1% (1)	1% (2)	2% (2)
Service/staff	0% (0)	1% (1)	1% (1)
Extra services/amenities available	0% (0)	1% (1)	1% (1)
Total members reporting	100% (72)	100% (155)	100% (133)

When commenting on why they became members of the Co-op, members that have a higher rating on the identity statements tended to make more comments about the associational aspects of the Co-op membership, where lower identifiers tended to make more comments on shopping attributes. For instance, high identifiers more often commented on local ownership and control (16%) and member ownership and control (6%), family traditions (15%), and the ‘Co-op idea’ (7%). On the other hand low identifiers are more commonly citing member benefits with membership (58%), the convenience and location of the Co-op (14%), and surprisingly, the Co-op idea (6%). It

is unclear why low identifiers are noting the Co-op idea as a reason for membership. Aside from this exception some interesting patterns emerged.

5.5.2 Long-distance loyal members revisited

In Chapter Four it was evidenced that a number of households in communities outside of Calgary were shopping at the Shawnessy Co-op as their primary grocery store, even though there were grocery stores in their immediate communities. Of twenty two households outside of the city of Calgary, half were shopping at the Co-op as part of their trip to and from work. For the other half of those households, it was unclear as to why they were shopping at the Calgary Co-op as their primary grocery store when there were closer stores in their immediate communities (e.g. High River, Priddis). This warranted a deeper examination of their responses to determine if a deeper loyalty was involved.

When examining their identity ratings, five of the eleven households highly identified with the Co-op, five moderately identified and one household had a low identification with the Co-op. When the motivations for shopping at the Co-op are examined, no clear pattern emerges. Again, shopping attributes such as service, product quality, service, and member benefits are mentioned. A couple of the households mention that they've been members of the Co-op a long time and are loyal customers, and mention the member benefits as a reason why they shop at the Co-op.

Overall, there is no outstanding reason as to why these members are traveling longer distances to shop at the Co-op. It may be that these customers are coordinating their grocery trips with other activities in the City of Calgary, such as doctors

appointments, socializing, and so on. In any case, these behaviours may warrant further research in the future.

5.6 Summary and Conclusions

Again, as in Chapter Four, members and non-members are not all that different with respect to their attitudes to shopping at the Co-op and at other stores. Both members and non-members hold the same store attributes as important, and these attributes have been found elsewhere in the existing literature on consumer attitudes (Oppewal, Timmermans and Louviere, 1997; Seiders and Tigert, 2000; Sommer, Hohn and Tyburczy, 1981). Member and non-member comments about the ideal shopping environment and shopping at the Co-op also do not show much divergence, and are similar in nature.

In terms of member participation in the Co-op and identity, member participation is seen as key to members' identification with the co-operative. However, when examining the likelihood of participation in different associational aspects of the Co-op (such as meetings, board participation, etc.), there is a low level of involvement by the members. A low level of active involvement in Co-ops in developing societies has been documented on in the Co-op literature (International Joint Project in Co-operative Democracy, 1995).

When member identities are examined, some interesting patterns emerge. Recommending membership and recommending shopping at the Co-op and recommending membership are highly rated by members, and this has been documented in other consumer studies as important repeat purchase behaviour and store loyalty. That the Co-op is important in the way members feel about themselves as people, and

that other members have the same values and interests as they do was moderately rated, as well as feeling the Co-op was like a community and part of members' communities. However, among these statements some difference emerged between different types of members. When members were grouped according to their level of identification, high identifiers tended to shop at the Co-op as their primary grocery store, and low identifiers tended to shop at other stores more often. The differences do not stop there. When re-examining motivations for becoming members of the Co-op, low identifiers tended to mention 'economic' motivations such as the member benefits (e.g. prices, sales, dividends), and high identifiers more often mentioned more social motivations, such as family traditions and member/local ownership.

What this suggests is that, looking at the membership of a co-operative and their behaviour, an examination of the membership as a cohesive whole may not provide an accurate assessment of their consumer behaviour and how this is influenced by their membership identity. When looking at members, it may be more fitting to view membership as fragmented and consisting of differing types of members. This will be explored further in the thesis summary and conclusions.

CHAPTER 6: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

6.1 Summary of findings

This thesis has attempted to look at the relationships between membership, consumer behaviour and identity in a consumer co-operative. A summarization of the main findings of this research are presented with each hypotheses.

6.1.1 Consumer co-operative members have different attitudes to shopping at the co-operative than non-members

Members and non-members are not dissimilar when referring to shopping attitudes. Like other studies on consumer behaviour and shopping preferences, both members and non-members preferred similar attributes. Such things as price, product quality, cleanliness, location and service were important and commonly mentioned in open ended responses.

6.1.2 Consumer co-operative members are more likely to shop at the co-operative than non-members

Here, again, members and non-members did not differ overly much in their shopping behaviour. While members did tend to shop more at the Co-op for the majority of their groceries, the difference was not statistically significant. In addition, the number of times members shopped at the Co-op and other stores, compared to non-members,

was not dissimilar. Surprisingly, members exhibited slightly higher cross-store shopping than non-members which is indicative in the literature of low store loyalty.

What was interesting was that when members did shop at other stores for the majority of their grocery purchases, they tended to choose a store that focused on low prices and ‘no-frills’ retailing. This suggests that the main motivator for members to shop at other stores was the price.

Based on the behaviour statements there was no strong difference between members and non-members on willingness to travel past the Co-operative or vice versa. In addition, both members and non-members tended to say that they would more likely shop at stores based on price, and had a low likelihood to use flyers to shop for groceries. It suggests again, that the price motive is equally important for members and non-members.

6.1.3 Consumer co-operative members with a strong membership identity will shop at the co-operative over other retailing forms

When the membership was disaggregated based on their level of identification with the co-operative, some interesting patterns emerged. There was a high statistical significance with the level of identification in the co-operative, and the store where they tended to shop for most of their groceries. Members with a high identification tended to shop at the Co-op more often. Lower identifiers tended to choose another store.

6.1.4 Consumer co-operative members are more likely to travel further distances to shop at the co-operative

Here, members were not different from non-members. A comparison of average distances that members and non-members travel to shop at the Co-op was not found to

be statistically significant, but it was noted that this may be successful result of the Co-op's neighbourhood siting strategy, minimizing the distances members and non-members had to travel to shop for goods.

There was however a subset of members that were loyal to the Co-op in terms of spending the majority of their grocery dollars there, yet were traveling from outside of the City of Calgary to do so. About half of these members were combining their grocery shopping with trips to and from work. As for the reasons for the other half to be shopping at the Co-op, the reasons are not entirely straightforward. For some they tend to be exhibiting higher levels of identification and loyalty in their open ended responses and identity statement ratings. For others, it may be that they are combining grocery shopping with other tasks such as dentist appointments, errands, etc.

6.1.5 Overall conclusions

Overall, membership itself isn't a telling indicator of specialized consumer behaviour and identification with the Co-op. While there was a slight tendency for members to frequent the Co-op more often and to shop at the Co-op for the majority of their grocery purchases, these differences did not hold statistical significance. Members overall were not found to be significantly different from non-members in terms of overt shopping behaviour. Distances members and non-members were traveling to shop at the Co-op were not significant, members and non-members rated attributes of shopping at a grocery store and the Co-op very similarly, and in-line with other studies of consumer behaviour.

As for identity, the major differences for identification and behaviour were found among different types of members. Members with a higher identification with the co-

operative were evidenced to have stronger loyalties to Calgary Co-op. On the other hand, those with lower levels of identification with the Co-op tended to frequent other stores more often.

6.2 Implications

There are some potential implications of this research. In terms of customer/member retention, it highlights that identification is an important aspect in the consumer/co-operative relationship. Co-operatives, and even retailers could focus on their member/customer identity as good business practice. For co-operatives, increased attention on member relations could foster more loyal consumer behaviour.

The results could lead to debates about whether it is really necessary for the Calgary Co-op to create a level of identification the members. At the moment it appears that members are identifying moderately with the Co-op, yet the Co-op itself is immensely successful. They appear to be focusing on their service quality and products, in an attempt to keep abreast of the competition. Their motto, to be 'the premier shopping destination in the communities we serve,' is indicative of their focus on quality and service.

I believe though, that to focus on the enterprise, and neglect the associational aspects of the co-operative is a potentially destructive practice, and in this sense this research can serve as a warning to both consumer co-operatives, and co-operatives in general. While the linkage between the members and their co-operative may not appear to be a priority if the co-operative is still running successfully, in times of hardship and downturn the co-operative will need the patronage of loyal members to continue to

operate. It is important for co-operatives to work to maintain this relationship between the association, and the membership.

6.3 Contributions: Retailing/Consumption Geographies, Co-operative Studies

This research has contributed to varying areas of research. In geographies of retailing and consumption, it has been an attempt to explicitly address identification and consumer behaviour, contributing to the growing area of research in this field. In addition, it has introduced the consumer co-operative as a retailing format to these sub-disciplines, something that has not been done to this date.

For co-operative studies, this study is one of few that centers the membership in research on their co-operative. To this date much research has focused on the co-operative organization itself, collecting data from employees, boards of directors, and how the co-operative operates as an organization, employing case studies to examine successes and challenges. This research was an attempt to investigate the linkages between membership (and identification), and overt consumer behaviour. It is also an attempt to introduce a geographical perspective to studies of co-operation, in particular consumer co-ops.

6.4 Limitations and Areas of Future Research

As it was the first time that a project of this nature was undertaken to my knowledge, there are some limitations. First, in hindsight it would have been useful to ask non-members as well about their identification to the Calgary Co-op. The research has highlighted that membership or non-membership does not immediately indicate a

difference in consumer behaviour; the same may be true for identification with the Co-op.

Furthermore, a pressing topic of research is the issue of gender in consumption geographies. An example of research that was addressed in the literature review was the construction of femininity through consumption space. The topic of gender was not addressed in this research, as it went beyond the scope of the research question and hypotheses posed. However, the influence of gender in behaviour difference and consumption identities would be an important area of future research.

Thirdly, it has already been mentioned in this thesis that the sample was predominately members (90%), and this was likely due to the fact that membership in the Co-op was needed to receive discounts and sales on merchandise. It is important to keep this in mind when interpreting the results. Because it is similar in nature to other loyalty programs, some members may have only become members in order to receive the discounts and this may have influenced the levels of identification with the co-operative seen in the results. In other words, if membership was not needed in order to benefit from sales and discounts at the Co-op, the composition of the membership group might have been different.

A final note on the limitations is with respect to the demographics of the area in question. Shawnessy Co-op is in a neighbourhood with specific demographic and ethnic characteristics. Other neighbourhoods with different characteristics, such as an older neighbourhood, or a neighbourhood with a significant number of visible minorities, may have different perceptions of their membership and how they identify with it. This would be a fruitful area of future research.

As for other future areas of research, an important study would be to look at why some non-members of the co-operative aren't becoming members. As could be seen in the consumer behaviour results, some non-members are shopping loyally at the Co-op, yet do not have a membership. Could it be that some non-members are viewing membership in the Co-op in the same light as membership in a loyalty card such as the Safeway Shopper Card? Research has shown that customers are becoming increasingly resistant to obtaining customer rewards/loyalty cards for the fact that there are simply too many programs available (Wright and Sparks, 1999). This might uncover areas Co-ops could focus on in highlighting their difference from conventional grocery stores.

In addition, it would make an interesting comparison to replicate research of this type in retailing centers in predominately rural areas. In many small towns in western Canada, the Co-op is often the only grocery store available. Are the member identities of consumer co-operatives different in rural areas, and to what extent? Do members identify more highly with their Co-op as part of their communities, and what effect does this have on their consumer behaviour? This research has highlighted that member identities are important for co-operatives, and in some rural areas, this may mean the difference between keeping services in immediate communities, and seeing them vanish. And as co-operatives are important entities in many rural regions of Canada, their future success is important.

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APPENDIX A: QUESTIONNAIRE COVER LETTER

Dear Sir or Madam,

I am a Masters student in the Department of Geography at the University of Saskatchewan and I am doing a study which I have titled 'Membership Identity and Consumer Behaviour: The Case of Consumer Co-operatives.' I hope to better understand the shopping behaviour of Calgary Co-op members, their attitudes toward their co-op, and their shopping preferences and patterns. At the same time, I hope to gain the perspective of Calgary Co-op customers who are not members, and how they feel about shopping at the co-op.

The information from this study will be useful in many ways. First, little is known about the relationship between members and their co-operative, and how this is influencing where members shop. This information will be useful to co-operatives as it will provide ideas about how to make the relationships between co-operative customers (members and non-members) and the store stronger. Secondly, in geography there have been studies of shopping behaviour, and identity, but there have not been studies which have looked at these two things at the same time. This study will attempt to provide insight into this interrelationship from a geographic perspective.

I am very grateful that you have agreed to participate in this study and have agreed to fill out a questionnaire. The questionnaire will take no longer than 1/2 hour to complete, and you can return the questionnaire to me using the postage paid envelope provided. Topics covered in the questionnaire include general shopping preferences, attitudes on shopping at Calgary Co-op, and general shopping patterns. There are also questions specifically for co-op members which look at member participation and identification as a member of the co-op.

By returning the completed survey it is understood that you have given me consent to use the information in my research. All the information given will be kept strictly confidential. Results will be presented at the group level. No reference will be made to you or other individual participants. The information given will be used in my Masters thesis, and in conference presentations and other papers based on my thesis. This study has been approved on ethical grounds by the University of Saskatchewan Behavioral Sciences Research Ethics Board on May 21, 2004. Any questions regarding your rights as a participant may be addressed to that committee through the Office of Research Services ((306) 966-2084). Participants may call collect.

Again, I want to say that I am very grateful that you have agreed to participate in this study. Your information makes a valuable contribution to my study and will help me to gain added insight into shopping patterns of co-op customers, and motivations for shopping at the co-op. As a token of my appreciation I have enclosed an entry form for a raffle prize of a \$50 gift certificate from Calgary Co-op, which is to be sealed in the smaller envelope provided. Please do not put any identifying information on this envelope. Once received, the envelope will be separated from the questionnaire. Your envelope will not be opened unless it is drawn for the

raffle. Your contact information will not be used for any other purposes than for the raffle prize. After the winning raffle ticket has been drawn, all entries will be destroyed.

If you have any comments or questions about the study, or if you would like to receive a copy of the results of the study, do not hesitate to contact me. You can contact me at (306) 966-5675 or angela.wagner@usask.ca. Alternatively you can contact my supervisor Dr. J. Pooler (phone: 966-5668; e-mail: jpooler@sasktel.net), the Head of the Department of Geography at 966-5654, or the Office of Research Services at 966-4053.

Yours Sincerely,

Angela Wagner, M.A. Candidate
Department of Geography
University of Saskatchewan

APPENDIX B: RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE

QUESTIONNAIRE

This survey is for a study called ‘Membership Identity and Consumer Behaviour: The Case of Consumer Co-operatives.’ The survey is for members and non-members who shop at the **Calgary Co-op**. It should take approximately **20 minutes** to complete. **Please take the time to read each question carefully and fill in your responses in the spaces provided.**

Consumer Behaviour (co-op store and other outlets):

1a. On average, how many **times per week** do you choose to shop at the **Calgary Co-op**?

(Please check one response)

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Less than once a week | <input type="checkbox"/> Four times per week |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Once a week | <input type="checkbox"/> Five times per week |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Twice a week | <input type="checkbox"/> More than five times per week |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Three times per week | |

b. Of the 16 Calgary Co-op stores in Calgary, do you shop most often at the Shawnessy store?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No

→ If NO, please provide the name of the Calgary Co-op store at which you most often purchase groceries:

Co-op Store Name

2. How many **times per week** do you choose to shop at **other grocery stores** that don't belong to the Calgary Co-op? (Please check one response)

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Less than once a week | <input type="checkbox"/> Four times per week |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Once a week | <input type="checkbox"/> Five times per week |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Twice a week | <input type="checkbox"/> More than five times per week |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Three times per week | |

→ Please provide the **closest street intersection(s)** of **other grocery stores** at which you purchase groceries, in the spaces below:

Store Name(s)

Intersection(s)

3. In which of the stores that are mentioned above (Co-op or other stores), do you purchase the **most** groceries in? (Please give **one** store only)

STORE: _____

4a. In order to understand your travel behaviour when shopping for groceries, would you please indicate the **street intersection nearest to your household?**

STREET 1: _____

STREET 2: _____

b. Please provide your **postal code**:

POSTAL CODE: _____

5a. Approximately how long (e.g. 5 minutes) does it take for you to **travel** to the **Shawnessy Co-op** from your home?

TIME: _____

b. Approximately how long (e.g. 5 minutes) does it take for you to travel to **other stores** to purchase groceries? Please list the stores you shop at and the approximate length of travel for each:

Store Name(s)

Time(s) to Travel to Store

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

6. On a scale from **1** to **10**, with **1** being **NOT LIKELY** and **10** being **VERY LIKELY**, please rate the following statements. (Please circle one number for each statement)

	NOT LIKELY											VERY LIKELY
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
I would travel past grocery stores closer to my home to shop at the Co-op												
I would travel past the Co-op closer to my home to shop at other stores												
I shop at the store which has the best prices												

I use store flyers to decide where to shop
for my groceries

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

7. Do you purchase groceries on your way home from **work**?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Applicable

→ If yes, could you please indicate which store you most often **shop at on your way home from work**?

2. Calgary Co-op Shawnessy
3. Other Calgary Co-op (please specify) _____
4. Other grocery store (please specify name and street intersection)

NAME: _____

STREET 1: _____ **STREET 2:** _____

→ Could you please provide the **closest street intersection** to your **place of work**:

STREET 1: _____ **STREET 2:** _____

8. Do you have any other comments on shopping at the Co-op or any other grocery stores?

Shopping preferences (general):

9. Can you please describe in your own words what are **important attributes** in choosing a grocery store:

10. Please rate on a scale of **1** to **10**, with **1** being **NOT IMPORTANT** to **10** being **VERY IMPORTANT** what you consider to be **important characteristics for choosing a grocery store** (Please circle one number for each statement)

	NOT IMPORTANT					VERY IMPORTANT				
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Availability of child care services										
Other services available (e.g. bank machine, cafeteria, etc.)										
Opportunity to socialize with other customers/friends etc.										
Availability of a customer club/air miles programme, etc.										
Provides support to the community										

Good quality groceries	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Low prices	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Availability of generic brands	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Wide product range for groceries	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Friendly and helpful staff	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Staff are treated well by the company	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Convenient store location	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Availability of parking	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Convenience of layout	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Attractiveness of store design	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Cleanliness of store	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Informative store flyers in newspapers	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
I can get my shopping done quickly	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
The store is locally-owned	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Motivations for shopping at the Co-op:

11. Can you please describe in your own words **why** you **choose to shop** at the Co-op?

12. Please rate on a scale of **1** to **10**, with **1** being **NOT IMPORTANT** to **10** being **VERY IMPORTANT**, what you consider to be **important reasons for shopping at the Co-op** (Please circle one number for each statement):

VERY IMPORTANT	NOT IMPORTANT
Availability of child care services	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Other services available (e.g. bank machine, cafeteria, etc.)	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Opportunity to socialize with other members/friends etc.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Member ownership/member benefits for patronage	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
I believe in the Co-op's values and philosophy	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Provides support to the community	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Good quality groceries	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Low prices	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Wide product range for groceries	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Availability of Co-op brands	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Friendly and helpful staff	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Staff are treated well by the Co-op	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
The location of the Co-op is convenient for me	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Availability of parking	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Convenience of layout	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Attractiveness of store design	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Cleanliness of store	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Informative store flyers in newspapers	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
I can get my shopping done quickly	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
The Co-op is locally-owned	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Member Activities: *(If you are **not** a member of the Co-op, please skip this section and go to the **Personal Information** section)*

13. On a scale of **1** to **10**, with **1** being **NOT AT ALL** and **10** being **VERY OFTEN**, please indicate how often you:

	NOT
VERY	AT ALL
OFTEN	
Read Co-op newsletters	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Read annual reports	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Attend Co-op meetings	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Participate in social activities at the Co-op (e.g. member appreciation days)	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Provide store and other feedback to the Co-operative	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Participated in the Co-op as a board member or volunteer	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Attend educational events at the Co-op	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Talk to other members I know about the Co-op	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

14. Do you participate in other Co-op activities not mentioned? If so, please write them below:

Member Identity Questions: *(If you are **not** a member of the Co-op, please skip this section and go to the **Personal Information** section)*

15. Can you please explain in your own words why you became a member of the Calgary Co-op?

16. On a scale from **1** to **10**, with **1** being **NOT LIKELY** to **10** being **VERY LIKELY**, please rate the following statements:

VERY LIKELY	NOT LIKELY
I would recommend becoming a member to others	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
I would recommend shopping at the Co-op to others	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Being a member is important to the way I think of myself as a person	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
I feel that other members have the same values and interests that I do	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
I feel the Co-op is like a community	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
The Co-op is part of my community	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Personal Information: *(This information will be used to classify the information you have provided above)*

17. Please write down **3-6 nouns** you would use to describe yourself:

18. Which age category do you fall in:

☐ 18-34 ☐ 35-54 ☐ 55+

19. Gender:

☐ Male ☐ Female

20. What is the highest level of education you have completed:

☐ Some high school ☐ High school graduate

- ☐ Some university ☐ University degree
☐ Other (please specify)_____

21. Are you a member of a union:

- ☐ Yes ☐ No

22. What income category does your total household income (before deductions) fall under:

- ☐ Under \$30,000 ☐ \$30,000-\$59,999 ☐ \$60,000 or more

23. What is your average household expenditure on groceries **per month**:

- ☐ Less than \$100 ☐ \$100-\$300
☐ \$300-500 ☐ \$500-\$700
☐ More than \$700

24. Including yourself, how many individuals are in your household?

➡ If there are other individuals in your household, how many are **children** (18 years of age or younger):

25. Do you volunteer in the community:

- ☐ Yes ☐ No

26. Are you or another individual in your household a member of the Co-op:

- ☐ Yes ☐ No

27. Do you hold the membership?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No

➡ If **yes**, how long have you been a member of the Co-op:

➡ If **no**, how long have you been shopping at the Co-op?

28. Are you or have you been a member of other Co-ops?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No

29. How many other memberships have you held or currently hold?

30. Overall, how would you rate your satisfaction with these other memberships?

☐ Not very satisfied
☐ Satisfied

☐ Somewhat satisfied
☐ Very Satisfied

31. What is your **primary mode of transportation** for your grocery purchases?

☐ Personal Vehicle

☐ Public Transit (Bus)

☐ Taxi Cab

☐ Walk/Bicycle

☐ Rides with family/friends

☐ Other _____

32. Do you have any other comments about the survey?

THANK-YOU FOR COMPLETING THIS SURVEY!!!

If you have any questions about the survey, you can contact me (Angela Wagner) at (306) 966-5675, or angela.wagner@usask.ca.

APPENDIX C: RAFFLE PRIZE ENTRY FORM

RAFFLE FORM

As my way of saying 'Thank-You' for completing this survey, I have enclosed this entry form for a chance to win a \$50 gift certificate from the Calgary Co-op. If you wish to be entered in this raffle, please fill out your contact information below, seal this sheet in the smaller envelope provided and send the envelope in with the questionnaire in the postage paid envelope. Please do NOT put any identifying information on the envelope(s). Once this is received, the entries will be separated from the questionnaires. Your entry will not be removed from its envelope unless your entry is drawn for the raffle prize. Your contact information will NOT be used for any other purposes other than for the raffle.

NAME: (PLEASE PRINT)

MAILING ADDRESS:

CITY:

PROVINCE:

POSTAL CODE:

TELEPHONE:
